Serfojee Rajah. 1822

THE

PARENT'S ASSISTANT;

OR,

STORIES FOR CHILDREN.

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

496

VOL. I.

CONTAINING

LAZY LAWRENCE,

TARLTON,

THE FALSE KEY.

A NEW EDITION.

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PREFACE

ADDRESSED TO PARENTS.

All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth. ARISTOTLE.

A MOTTO from Aristotle may appear pedantic, but it was chosen merely to oppose such high authority to the following assertions of Dr. Johnson.

"Education," says he, "is as well known, "and has long been as well known, as ever it "can be. Endeavouring to make children pre-"maturely wise is useless labour. Suppose they "have more knowledge at five or six years old "than other children, what use can be made of "it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the "waste of so much time and labour of the teacher "is never to be repaid.*"—The remainder of this passage contains such an illiberal attack upon a celebrated female writer, as ought surely to have been suppressed by Dr. Johnson's biographer. When the doctor attempted to ridicule this

* Boswell's Life of Johnson.

lady for keeping an infant boarding-school, and for condescending to write elementary books for children, he forgot his own eulogium upon Dr. Watts, of whom he speaks thus:

"For children he condescended to lay aside "the philosopher, the scholar, and the wit, to "write little poems of devotion, and systems of "instruction adapted to their wants and capa-"cities, from the dawn of reason, to its grada-"tion of advance in the morning of life. Every "man acquainted with the common principles "of human action, will look with veneration "on the writer, who is at one time combating "Locke, and at another time making a cate-"chism for *children in their fourth year*. A volun-"tary descent from the dignity of science is per-"haps the hardest lesson which humility can "teach."

It seems, however, a very easy task to write for children. Those only who have been interested in the education of a family, who have patiently followed children through the first processes of reasoning, who have daily watched over their thoughts and feelings; those only, who know with what ease and rapidity the early associations of ideas are formed on which the future taste, character, and happiness depend, can feel

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the dangers and difficulties of such an undertaking.

For a length of time education was classed amongst the subjects of vague and metaphysical speculation; but, of late, it has attained its proper station in experimental philosophy.—The sober sense of Locke, and the enthusiastic eloquence of Rousseau, have directed to this object the attention of philosophers and men of genius. Many theories have been invented, several just observations have been made, and some few facts have been established.

Dr. Reid remarks, that "if we could obtain a "distinct and full history of all that hath passed in "the mind of a child, from the beginning of life "and sensation, till it grows up to the use of rea-"son, how its infant faculties began to work, and "how they brought forth and ripened all the va-"rious notions, opinions, and sentiments which "we find in ourselves, when we come to be capa-"ble of reflection, this would be a treasure of na-"tural history, which would probably give more "light to the human faculties, than all the sys-"tems of philosophers about them, since the be-"ginning of the world*."

* Dr. Reid on the Intellectual Powers of Man.

Indeed in all sciences the grand difficulty has been to ascertain facts—a difficulty, which in the science of education peculiar circumstances conspire to increase. Here the objects of every experiment are so interesting, that we cannot hold our minds indifferent to the result. Nor is it to be expected, that many registers of experiments, successful and unsuccessful, should be kept, much less should be published, when we consider, that the combined powers of affection and vanity, of partiality to his child and to his theory, will act upon the mind of a parent, in opposition to the abstract love of justice, and the general desire to increase the wisdom and happiness of mankind.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, an attempt to keep such a register has actually been made: it was begun in the year 1776, long before Dr. Reid's book was published. The design has from time to time been pursued to this present year; and though much has not been collected, every circumstance and conversation that has been preserved is faithfully and accurately related.

These notes have been of great advantage to the writer of the following Stories; and will probably, at some future time, be laid before the pub-

lic, as a collection of experiments upon a subject which has been hitherto treated theoretically.

The following tales have been divided into two parts, as they were designed for different classes of children. The question, whether society could subsist without the distinction of ranks, is a question involving a variety of complicated discussions, which we leave to the politician and the legislator. At present it is necessary that the education of different ranks should, in some respects, be different; they have few ideas, few habits, in common; their peculiar vices and virtues do not arise from the same causes, and their ambition is to be directed to different objects. But justice, truth, and humanity, are confined to no particular rank, and should be enforced with equal care and energy upon the minds of young people of every station: and it is hoped that these principles have never been forgotten in the following pages.

As the ideas of children multiply, the language of their books should become less simple; else their taste will quickly be disgusted, or will remain stationary. Children that live with people who converse with elegance, will not be contented with a style inferior to what they hear from every body near them.

It may be remarked, that almost all language

is metaphoric—from the conversation of the maid in the nursery, who lulls a cross infant to sleep, to that of the lady in the drawing-room, who, with silly civility, takes a child upon her lap to entertain it by a repetition of fashionable phrases. *Slang* (the term is disgracefully naturalised in our vocabulary) contains as much and as abstract metaphor as can be found in the most refined literary language. Nor have we reason to suppose, that one kind of metaphor is more difficult than another to be understood by children; they frequently hear the most complicated metaphorical expressions in conversation, such as allude to our fashions and the prejudices of society, with which they are utterly unacquainted.

All poetical allusions have, however, been avoided in this book—only such situations are described, as children can easily imagine, and which may consequently interest their feelings.—Such examples of virtue are painted as are not above their conception of excellence, and their powers of sympathy and emulation.

It is not easy to give *rewards* to children, which shall not indirectly do them harm, by fostering some hurtful taste or passion. In the story of *Lazy Lawrence*, where the object was to excite a spirit of industry, care has been taken to propor-

tion the reward to the exertion, and to point out that people feel cheerful and happy whilst they are employed. The reward of our industrious boy, though it be money, is only money considered as the means of gratifying a benevolent wish. In a commercial nation, it is especially necessary to separate, as much as possible, the spirit of industry and avarice; and to beware lest we introduce Vice under the form of Virtue.

In the story of *Tarlton and Loveit* are represented the danger and the folly of that weakness of mind, and easiness to be led, which too often pass for good-nature; and, in the story of the *False Key*, are pointed out some of the evils to which a well-educated boy, when he first goes to service, is exposed, from the profligacy of his fellow-servants.

In the *Birth-day Present*, in the *History of Mademoiselle Panache*, and in the character of *Mrs. Theresa Tattle*, the Parent's Assistant has pointed out the dangers which may arise in education from a bad servant, a silly governess, and a common acquaintance.

In the *Barring-out*, the errors to which a high spirit and the love of party are apt to lead, have been made the subject of correction; and it is hoped that the common fault of making the most

mischievous characters appear the most *active* and the most ingenious, has been as much as possible avoided. *Unsuccessful* cunning will not be admired, and cannot induce imitation.

It has likewise been attempted in these Stories to provide antidotes against ill-humour, the epidemic rage for dissipation, and the fatal propensity to admire and imitate whatever the fashion of the moment may distinguish. Were young people, either in public schools or in private families, absolutely free from bad examples, it would not be adviseable to introduce despicable and vicious characters in books intended for their improvement. But in real life they *must* see vice, and it is best that they should be early shocked with the representation of what they are to avoid. There is a great deal of difference between innocence and ignorance.

To prevent precepts of morality from tiring the ear and the mind, it was necessary to make the stories in which they are introduced in some measure dramatic; to keep alive hope, and fear, and curiosity, by some degree of intricacy. At the same time care has been taken to avoid inflaming the imagination, or exciting a restless spirit of adventure, by exhibiting false views of life, and creating hopes which, in the ordinary course of things, cannot be realised.

Dr. Johnson—to recur to him, not from a spirit of contradiction, but from a fear that his authority should establish errors—Dr. Johnson says, that " Babies do not like to hear stories of babies " like themselves; that they require to have their " imaginations raised by tales of giants and fai- " ries, and castles and enchantments."—The fact remains to be proved: but supposing that they do prefer such tales, is this a reason why they should be indulged in reading them? It may be said that a little experience in life would soon convince them, that fairies, giants, and enchanters, are not to be met with in the world. But why should the mind be filled with fantastic visions, instead of useful knowledge? Why should so much valuable time be lost? Why should we vitiate their taste, and spoil their appetite, by suffering them to feed upon sweetmeats? It is to be hoped, that the magic of Dr. Johnson's name will not have power to restore the reign of fairies.

But even when the improbability of fairy tales is avoided, care should be taken to keep objects in their just proportions, when we attempt an imitation of real life.

" Love, hatred, fear, and anger, are to be raised " in the soul," says an eminent poet, " by showing " their objects out of their true proportion, either

"greater than the life or less; but instruction is "to be given, by showing them what they really "are."

And surely a writer, who sincerely wishes to increase the happiness of mankind, will find it easy to give up the fame that might be acquired by eloquence, when it is injurious to the cause of truth.

The Stories, entitled, *the Little Dog Trusty, the Orange Man and the Thief*, and *the Purple Jar*, which were given in the former edition, are transferred to a work for younger children, entitled, Early Lessons.

LAZY LAWRENCE.

In the pleasant valley of Ashton there lived an elderly woman of the name of Preston: she had a small neat cottage, and there was not a weed to be seen in her garden. It was upon her garden that she chiefly depended for support: it consisted of strawberry-beds, and one small border for flowers. The pinks and roses she tied up in nice nosegays, and sent either to Clifton or Bristol to be sold; as to her strawberries, she did not send them to market, because it was the custom for numbers of people to come from Clifton, in the summer-time, to eat strawberries and cream at the gardens in Ashton.

Now the widow Preston was so obliging, active, and good-humoured, that

every one who came to see her was pleased. She lived happily in this manner for several years; but, alas! one autumn she fell sick, and, during her illness, every thing went wrong; her garden was neglected, her cow died, and all the money which she had saved was spent in paying for medicines. The winter passed away, while she was so weak that she could earn but little by her work; and, when the summer came, her rent was called for, and the rent was not ready in her little purse as usual. She begged a few months' delay, and they were granted to her; but at the end of that time there was no resource but to sell her horse Lightfoot. Now Lightfoot, though perhaps he had seen his best days, was a very great favourite: in his youth he had always carried the dame to market behind her husband;

and it was now her little son Jem's turn to ride him. It was Jem's business to feed Lightfoot, and to take care of him; a charge which he never neglected, for, besides being a very good-natured, he was a very industrious boy.

"It will go near to break my Jem's heart," said dame Preston to herself, as she sat one evening beside the fire, stirring the embers, and considering how she had best open the matter to her son, who stood opposite to her, eating a dry crust of bread very heartily for supper.

"Jem," said the old woman, "what, art hungry?"

"That I am, brave and hungry!"

"Aye! no wonder, you've been brave hard at work—Eh?"

"Brave hard! I wish it was not so dark, mother, that you might just step out and see the great bed I've dug; I

know you'd say it was no bad day's work—and, oh mother! I've good news; Farmer Truck will give us the giant-strawberries, and I'm to go for 'em to-morrow morning, and I'll be back afore breakfast."

"Bless the boy! how he talks!—Four mile there, and four mile back again, afore breakfast."

"Aye, upon Lightfoot, you know, mother, very easily, mayn't I?"

"Aye, child!"

"Why do you sigh, mother?"

"Finish thy supper, child."

"I've done!" cried Jem, swallowing the last mouthful hastily, as if he thought he had been too long at supper—"and now for the great needle; I must see and mend Lightfoot's bridle afore I go to bed."—To work he set, by the light of the fire; and the dame having once more

stirred it, began again with "Jem, dear, does he go lame at all now?"—"What, Lightfoot! Oh la, no, not he!—never was so well of his lameness in all his life—he's grown quite young again, I think; and then he's so fat he can hardly wag."—"Bless him—that's right—we must see, Jem, and keep him fat."

"For what, mother?"

"For Monday fortnight at the fair. He's to be——sold!"

"Lightfoot!" cried Jem, and let the bridle fall from his hand; "and *will* mother sell Lightfoot?"

"*Will!* no: but I *must*, Jem."

"Must; who says you *must?* why *must* you, mother?"

"I must, I say, child—Why, must not I pay my debts honestly—and must not I pay my rent; and was not it called for long and long ago; and have not I

had time: and did not I promise to pay it for certain Monday fortnight, and am not I two guineas short—and where am I to get two guineas? So what signifies talking, child?" said the widow, leaning her head upon her arm, "Lightfoot must go."

Jem was silent for a few minutes.—"Two guineas; that's a great, great deal.—If I worked, and worked, and worked ever so hard, I could no-ways earn two guineas *afore* Monday fortnight—could I, mother?"

"Lord help thee, no; not an' work thyself to death."

"But I could earn something, though, I say," cried Jem proudly; "and I *will* earn *something*—if it be ever so little it will be *something*—and I shall do my very best; so I will."

"That I'm sure of, my child," said

his mother, drawing him towards her, and kissing him; "you were always a good industrious lad, *that* I will say afore your face or behind your back;—but it won't do now—Lightfoot *must* go."

Jem turned away, struggling to hide his tears, and went to bed without saying a word more. But he knew that crying would do no good; so he presently wiped his eyes, and lay awake, considering what he could possibly do to save the horse.—"If I get ever so little," he still said to himself, "it will be *something*; and who knows but landlord might then wait a bit longer? and we might make it all up in time; for a penny a-day might come to two guineas in time."

But how to get the first penny was the question.—Then he recollected that

one day, when he had been sent to Clifton to sell some flowers, he had seen an old woman with a board beside her covered with various sparkling stones, which people stopped to look at as they passed, and he remembered that some people bought the stones; one paid twopence, another threepence, and another sixpence for them; and Jem heard her say that she got them amongst the neighbouring rocks: so he thought that if he tried he might find some too, and sell them as she had done.

Early in the morning he wakened full of his schemes, jumped up, dressed himself, and, having given one look at poor Lightfoot in his stable, set off to Clifton in search of the old woman, to inquire where she found her sparkling stones. But it was too early in the morning, the old woman was not at her seat; so he

turned back again disappointed.—He did not waste his time waiting for her, but saddled and bridled Lightfoot, and went to farmer Truck's for the giant-strawberries. A great part of the morning was spent in putting them into the ground; and, as soon as that was finished, he set out again in quest of the old woman, whom, to his great joy, he spied sitting at her corner of the street with her board before her. But this old woman was deaf and cross; and when at last Jem made her hear his questions, he could get no answer from her, but that she found the fossils where he would never find any more. "But can't I look where you looked?"—"Look away, nobody hinders you," replied the old woman; and these were the only words she would say.—Jem was not, however, a boy to be easily discouraged; he went

to the rocks, and walked slowly along, looking at all the stones as he passed. Presently he came to a place where a number of men were at work loosening some large rocks, and one amongst the workmen was stooping down looking for something very eagerly; Jem ran up, and asked if he could help him. "Yes," said the man, "you can; I've just dropped, amongst this heap of rubbish, a fine piece of crystal that I got to-day." —"What kind of a looking thing is it?" said Jem. "White, and like glass," said the man, and went on working whilst Jem looked very carefully over the heap of rubbish for a great while. "Come," said the man, "it's gone for ever; don't trouble yourself any more, my boy."—"It's no trouble; I'll look a little longer; we'll not give it up so soon," said Jem; and, after he had

looked a little longer, he found the piece of crystal. "Thank'e," said the man, "you are a fine little industrious fellow." Jem, encouraged by the tone of voice in which the man spoke this, ventured to ask him the same questions which he asked the old woman. "One good turn deserves another," said the man; "we are going to dinner just now, and shall leave off work—wait for me here, and I'll make it worth your while."

Jem waited; and, as he was very attentively observing how the workmen went on with their work, he heard somebody near him give a great yawn, and, turning round, he saw stretched upon the grass, beside the river, a boy about his own age, who he knew very well went in the village of Ashton by the name of Lazy Lawrence; a name which he most justly deserved, for he never did

any thing from morning to night; he neither worked nor played, but sauntered or lounged about restless and yawning. His father was an alehouse-keeper, and being generally drunk, could take no care of his son, so that Lazy Lawrence grew every day worse and worse. However, some of the neighbours said that he was a good-natured poor fellow enough, and would never do any one harm but himself; whilst others, who were wiser, often shook their heads, and told him, that idleness was the root of all evil.

"What, Lawrence!" cried Jem to him, when he saw him lying upon the grass—"what, are you asleep?"—"Not quite."—"Are you awake?"—"Not quite."—"What are you doing there?"—"Nothing."—"What are you thinking of?"—"Nothing."—"What makes

you lie there?"—"I don't know—because I can't find any body to play with me to-day—Will you come and play?" —"No, I can't; I'm busy."—"Busy!' cried Lawrence, stretching himself, "you are always busy—I would not be you for the world, to have so much to do always."—"And I," said Jem, laughing, "would not be you for the world, to have nothing to do." So they parted, for the workman just then called Jem to follow him. He took him home to his own house, and showed him a parcel of fossils which he had gathered, he said, on purpose to sell, but had never had time yet to sort them. He set about it however, now; and having picked out those which he judged to be the best, he put them into a small basket, and gave them to Jem to sell, upon condition that he should bring him half of what

he got. Jem, pleased to be employed, was ready to agree to what the man proposed, provided his mother had no objection to it. When he went home to dinner, he told his mother his scheme; and she smiled and said he might do as he pleased, for she was not afraid of his being from home. "You are not an idle boy," said she, "so there is little danger of your getting into any mischief."

Accordingly Jem that evening took his stand, with his little basket, upon the bank of the river, just at the place where people land from a ferry-boat, and where the walk turns to the wells, where numbers of people perpetually pass to drink the waters. He chose his place well, and waited almost all evening, offering his fossils with great assiduity to every passenger: but not one person bought any. "Holla!" cried some sail-

ors, who had just rowed a boat to land, "bear a hand here, will you, my little fellow! and carry these parcels for us into yonder house." Jem ran down immediately for the parcels, and did what he was asked to do so quickly, and with so much good will, that the master of the boat took notice of him, and, when he was going away, stopped to ask him what he had got in his little basket: and when he saw that they were fossils, he immediately told Jem to follow him, for that he was going to carry some shells he had brought from abroad to a lady in the neighbourhood who was making a grotto. "She will very likely buy your stones into the bargain; come along, my lad, we can but try."

The lady lived but a very little way off, so that they were soon at her house. She was alone in her parlour, and was

sorting a bundle of feathers of different colours; they lay on a sheet of pasteboard upon a window-seat, and it happened that as the sailor was bustling round the table to show off his shells, he knocked down the sheet of pasteboard, and scattered all the feathers.

The lady looked very sorry, which Jem observing, he took the opportunity, whilst she was busy looking over the sailor's bag of shells, to gather together all the feathers, and sort them according to their different colours, as he had seen them sorted when he first came into the room.

"Where is the little boy you brought with you? I thought I saw him here just now."—"And here I am, ma'am," cried Jem, creeping from under the table with some few remaining feathers which he had picked from the carpet; "I

thought," added he, pointing to the others, "I had better be doing something than standing idle, ma'am." She smiled, and, pleased with his activity and simplicity, began to ask him several questions; such as, who he was, where he lived, what employment he had, and how much a day he earned by gathering fossils. "This is the first day I ever tried," said Jem; "I never sold any yet, and, if you don't buy 'em now, ma'am, I'm afraid nobody else will, for I've asked every body else."—"Come then," said the lady, laughing, "if that is the case, I think I had better buy them all." So emptying all the fossils out of his basket, she put half a crown into it. Jem's eyes sparkled with joy. "Oh, thank you, ma'am," said he, "I will be sure and bring you as many more to-morrow."—"Yes, but I don't promise

you," said she, "to give you half a crown to-morrow."—"But, perhaps, though you don't promise it, you will." —"No," said the lady, "do not deceive yourself; I assure you that I will not. *That*, instead of encouraging you to be industrious, would teach you to be idle." Jem did not quite understand what she meant by this, but answered, "I'm sure I don't wish to be idle; what I want is to earn something every day, if I knew how: I'm sure I don't wish to be idle. If you knew all, you'd know I did not."—"How do you mean, *If I knew all?*"—"Why I mean, if you knew about Lightfoot."—"Who's Lightfoot?" —"Why, mammy's horse," added Jem, looking out of the window; "I must make haste home and feed him, afore it get dark; he'll wonder what's gone with me."—"Let him wonder a

few minutes longer," said the lady, "and tell me the rest of your story."—"I've no story, ma'am, to tell, but as how mammy says he must go to the fair Monday fortnight to be sold, if she can't get the two guineas for her rent; and I should be main sorry to part with him, for I love him, and he loves me; so I'll work for him, I will, all I can: to be sure, as mammy says, I have no chance, such a little fellow as I am, of earning two guineas afore Monday fortnight."—"But are you in earnest willing to work?" said the lady; "you know there is a great deal of difference between picking up a few stones, and working steadily every day, and all day long."—"But," said Jem, "I would work every day, and all day long."—"Then," said the lady, "I will give you work. Come here to-morrow morning, and my gar-

dener will set you to weed the shrubberies, and I will pay you sixpence a day. Remember you must be at the gates by six o'clock." Jem bowed, thanked her, and went away. It was late in the evening, and he was impatient to get home to feed Lightfoot; yet he recollected that he had promised the man who had trusted him to sell the fossils, that he would bring him half of what he got for them; so he thought that he had better go to him directly; and away he went, running along by the waterside about a quarter of a mile, till he came to the man's house. He was just come home from work, and was surprised when Jem showed him the half-crown, saying, "Look what I got for the stones; you are to have half, you know."—"No," said the man, when he had heard his story, "I shall not take

half of that; it was given to you. I expected but a shilling at the most, and the half of that is but sixpence, and that I'll take.—Wife! give the lad two shillings, and take this half-crown." So his wife opened an old glove, and took out two shillings; and the man, as she opened the glove, put in his fingers, and took out a little silver penny.—"There, he shall have that into the bargain for his honesty—Honesty is the best policy—There's a lucky penny for you, that I've kept ever since I can remember."—"Don't you ever go to part with it, do ye hear?" cried the woman. "Let him do what he will with it, wife," said the man. "But," argued the wife, "another penny would do just as well to buy gingerbread, and that's what it will go for."—"No, that it shall not, I promise you," said Jem; and so he ran

away home, fed Lightfoot, stroked him, went to bed, jumped up at five o'clock in the morning, and went singing to work as gay as a lark.

Four days he worked "every day and all day long;" and the lady every evening, when she came out to walk in her gardens, looked at his work. At last she said to her gardener, "This little boy works very hard."—"Never had so good a little boy about the grounds," said the gardener; "he's always at his work, let me come by when I will, and he has got twice as much done as another would do; yes, twice as much, ma'am; for look here—he began at this here rose bush, and now he's got to where you stand, ma'am; and here is the day's work that t'other boy, and he's three years older too, did to-day—I say, measure Jem's fairly, and it's twice as much,

I'm sure."—"Well," said the lady to her gardener, "show me how much is a fair good day's work for a boy of his age."—"Come at six o'clock, and go at six? why, about this much, ma'am," said the gardener, marking off a piece of the border with his spade. "Then, little boy," said the lady, "so much shall be your task every day; the gardener will mark it off for you; and when you've done, the rest of the day you may do what you please." Jem was extremely glad of this; and the next day he had finished his task by four o'clock, so that he had all the rest of the evening to himself. Jem was as fond of play as any little boy could be, and when he was at it, played with all the eagerness and gaiety imaginable: so as soon as he had finished his task, fed Lightfoot, and put by the sixpence he

had earned that day, he ran to the play-ground in the village, where he found a party of boys playing, and amongst them Lazy Lawrence, who indeed was not playing, but lounging upon a gate with his thumb in his mouth. The rest were playing at cricket. Jem joined them, and was the merriest and most active amongst them; till, at last, when quite out of breath with running, he was obliged to give up to rest himself, and sat down upon the stile, close to the gate on which Lazy Lawrence was swinging. "And why don't you play, Lawrence?" said he.—"I'm tired," said Lawrence.—"Tired of what?"—"I don't know well what tires me; grand-mother says I'm ill, and I must take something—I don't know what ails me."—"Oh, pugh! take a good race, one two, three, and away, and you'll find

yourself as well as ever. Come, run—one, two, three, and away."—"Ah, no, I can't run indeed," said he, hanging back heavily; "you know I can play all day long if I like it, so I don't mind play as you do, who have only one hour for it."—"So much the worse for you. Come now, I'm quite fresh again, will you have one game at ball? do."—"No, I tell you I can't; I'm as tired as if I had been working all day long as hard as a horse."—"Ten times more," said Jem, "for I have been working all day long as hard as a horse, and yet you see I'm not a bit tired; only a little out of breath just now."—"That's very odd," said Lawrence, and yawned, for want of some better answer; then taking out a handful of halfpence—"See what I got from father to-day, because I asked him just at the right

time, when he had drunk a glass or two; then I can get any thing I want out of him—see! a penny, two-pence, three-pence, four-pence—there's eight-pence in all; would not you be happy if you had *eight-pence?*"—"Why, I don't know," said Jem laughing, "for you don't seem happy, and you *have eight-pence.*"—"That does not signify though—I'm sure you only say that because you envy me—you don't know what it is to have eight-pence — you never had more than two-pence or three-pence at a time in all your life." Jem smiled. "Oh, as to that," said he, "you are mistaken, for I have at this very time more than two-pence, three-pence, or eight-pence either; I have—let me see—stones, two shillings; then five days' work, that's five sixpences, that's two shillings and six-pence, in all

makes four shillings and six-pence, and my silver penny, is four and seven-pence. Four and seven-pence !"—" You have not," said Lawrence, roused so as absolutely to stand upright, " four and seven-pence ! have you ? Show it me, and then I'll believe you."—" Follow me then," cried Jem, " and I'll soon make you believe me ; come."—" Is it far ?" said Lawrence, following, half-running half-hobbling, till he came to the stable, where Jem showed him his treasure. " And how did you come by it ? honestly ?"—" Honestly ! to be sure I did ; I earned it all."—" Bless me, earned it ! well, I've a great mind to work ; but then it's such hot weather ; besides, grandmother says I'm not strong enough yet for hard work ; and besides, I know how to coax daddy out of money when I want it, so I need not work—

But four and seven-pence! let's see, what will you do with it all?"—"That's a secret," said Jem, looking great. "I can guess. I know what I'd do with it if it was mine.—First, I'd buy pockets-full of gingerbread; then I'd buy ever so many apples and nuts: don't you love nuts? I'd buy nuts enough to last me from this time to Christmas, and I'd make little Newton crack 'em for me; for that's the worst of nuts, there's the trouble of cracking 'em."—"Well, you never deserve to have a nut."—"But you'll give me some of yours," said Lawrence in a fawning tone, for he thought it easier to coax than to work —"you'll give me some of your good things, won't you?"—"I shall not have any of those good things," said Jem. "Then what will you do with all your money?"—"Oh, I know very well

what to do with it; but, as I told you, that's a secret, and I shan't tell it any body—Come now, let's go back and play—their game's up, I dare say."—Lawrence went back with him full of curiosity, and out of humour with himself and his eight-pence.—" If I had four and seven-pence," said he to himself, " I certainly should be happy!"

The next day, as usual, Jem jumped up before six o'clock and went to his work, whilst Lazy Lawrence sauntered about without knowing what to do with himself. In the course of two days he laid out six-pence of his money in apples and gingerbread, and as long as these lasted he found himself well received by his companions; but at length the third day he spent his last halfpenny, and when it was gone, unfortunately some nuts tempted him very much, but he

had no money to pay for them; so he ran home to coax his father as he called it. When he got home, he heard his father talking very loud, and at first he thought he was drunk; but when he opened the kitchen-door, he saw that he was not drunk, but angry.

"You lazy dog!" cried he, turning suddenly upon Lawrence, and gave him such a violent box on the ear as made the light flash from his eyes; "you lazy dog! see what you've done for me—look!—look, look, I say!" Lawrence looked as soon as he came to the use of his senses, and, with fear, amazement, and remorse, beheld at least a dozen bottles burst, and the fine Worcestershire cider streaming over the floor. "Now, did not I order you three days ago to carry these bottles to the cellar; and did not I charge you to wire the

corks? answer me, you lazy rascal; did not I?"—"Yes," said Lawrence, scratching his head. "And why was it not done? I ask you," cried his father with renewed anger, as another bottle burst at the moment. "What do you stand there for, you lazy brat? why don't you move? I say. No, no," catching hold of him, "I believe you can't move; but I'll make you." And he shook him, till Lawrence was so giddy he could not stand. "What had you to think of? what had you to do all day long, that you could not carry my cider, my Worcestershire cider, to the cellar whenI bid you? But go, you'll never be good for any thing, you are such a lazy rascal—get out of my sight!" So saying, he pushed him out of the house-door, and Lawrence sneaked off,

seeing that this was no time to make his petition for halfpence.

The next day he saw the nuts again, and, wishing for them more than ever, went home in hopes that his father, as he said to himself, would be in a better humour. But the cider was still fresh in his recollection, and the moment Lawrence began to whisper the word "halfpenny" in his ear, his father swore, with a loud oath, "I will not give you a halfpenny, no, not a farthing, for a month to come; if you want money, go work for it; I've had enough of your laziness—Go work!" At these terrible words Lawrence burst into tears, and, going to the side of a ditch, sat down and cried for an hour; and when he had cried till he could cry no more, he exerted himself so far as to empty his

pockets, to see whether there might not happen to be one halfpenny left; and to his great joy, in the farthest corner of his pocket one halfpenny was found. With this he proceeded to the fruit-woman's stall. She was busy weighing out some plums, so he was obliged to wait; and, whilst he was waiting, he heard some people near him talking and laughing very loud. The fruit-woman's stall was at the gate of an inn-yard; and peeping through the gate in this yard, Lawrence saw a postilion and stable-boy about his own size playing at pitch-farthing. He stood by watching them for a few minutes. "I begun but with one halfpenny," cried the stable-boy with an oath, "and now I've got two-pence!" added he, jingling the halfpence in his waistcoat-pocket. Lawrence was moved at the sound, and said to himself,

"If I begin with one halfpenny, I may end like him with having two-pence; and it is easier to play at pitch-farthing than to work."

So he stepped forward, presenting his halfpenny, offering to toss up with the stable-boy, who, after looking him full in the face, accepted the proposal, and threw his halfpenny into the air. "Head or tail?" cried he. "Head," replied Lawrence, and it came up head. He seized the penny, surprised at his own success, and would have gone instantly to have laid it out in nuts; but the stable-boy stopped him, and tempted him to throw again. This time he lost; he threw again and won; and so he went on, sometimes losing, but most frequently winning, till half the morning was gone. At last, however, he chanced to win twice running, and, finding him-

self master of three halfpence, said he would play no more. The stable-boy, grumbling, swore he would have his revenge another time, and Lawrence went and bought the nuts. "It is a good thing," said he to himself, "to play at pitch-farthing: the next time I want a halfpenny, I'll not ask my father for it, nor go to work neither." Satisfied with this resolution he sat down to crack his nuts at his leisure, upon the horse-block in the inn-yard. Here, whilst he ate, he overheard the conversation of the stable-boys and postilions. At first their shocking oaths and loud wrangling frightened and shocked him; for Lawrence, though a *lazy*, had not yet learned to be a *wicked* boy. But, by degrees, he was accustomed to their swearing and quarrelling, and took a delight and interest in their disputes and

battles. As this was an amusement which he could enjoy without any sort of exertion on his part, he soon grew so fond of it, that every day he returned to the stable-yard, and the horse-block became his constant seat. Here he found some relief from the insupportable fatigue of doing nothing; and here, hour after hour, with his elbows on his knees, and his head on his hands, he sat the spectator of wickedness. Gaming, cheating, and lying, soon became familiar to him; and, to complete his ruin, he formed a sudden and close intimacy with the stable-boy with whom he had first begun to game—a very bad boy. The consequences of this intimacy we shall presently see. But it is now time to inquire what little Jem has been doing all this while.

One day, after he had finished his

task, the gardener asked him to stay a little while, to help him to carry some geranium pots into the hall. Jem, always active and obliging, readily stayed from play, and was carrying in a heavy flower-pot, when his mistress crossed the hall. "What a terrible litter," said she, "you are a-making here—why don't you wipe your shoes upon the mat?" Jem turned round to look for the mat, but he saw none. "Oh," said the lady, recollecting herself, "I can't blame you, for there is no mat."—"No, ma'am," said the gardener, "nor I don't know when, if ever, the man will bring home those mats you bespoke, ma'am."—"I am very sorry to hear that," said the lady; "I wish we could find somebody who would do them, if he can't—I should not care what sort of mats they were, so that one could wipe

one's feet on them." Jem, as he was sweeping away the litter, when he heard these last words, said to himself, "Perhaps I could make a mat." And all the way home, as he trudged along whistling, he was thinking over a scheme for making mats, which, however bold it may appear, he did not despair of executing, with patience and industry. Many were the difficulties which his "*prophetic eye*" foresaw; but he felt within himself that spirit, which spurs men on to great enterprises, and makes them "trample on impossibilities."

He recollected, in the first place, that he had seen Lazy Lawrence, whilst he lounged upon the gate, twist a bit of heath into different shapes; and he thought that if he could find some way of plaiting heath firmly together, it would make a very pretty green, soft

mat, which would do very well for one to wipe one's shoes on. About a mile from his mother's house, on the common which Jem rode over when he went to farmer Truck's for the giant strawberries, he remembered to have seen a great quantity of this heath; and, as it was now only six o'clock in the evening, he knew that he should have time to feed Lightfoot, stroke him, go to the common, return, and make one trial of his skill before he went to bed.

Lightfoot carried him swiftly to the common, and there Jem gathered as much of the heath as he thought he should want. But, what toil, what time, what pains did it cost him, before he could make any thing like a mat! Twenty times he was ready to throw aside the heath, and give up his project, from impatience of repeated dis-

appointments. But still he persevered. Nothing *truly great* can be accomplished without toil and time. Two hours he worked before he went to bed. All his play-hours the next day he spent at his mat; which, in all, made five hours of fruitless attempts—The sixth, however, repaid him for the labours of the other five; he conquered his grand difficulty of fastening the heath substantially together, and at length completely finished a mat, which far surpassed his most sanguine expectations. He was extremely happy—sung, danced round it—whistled—looked at it again and again, and could hardly leave off looking at it when it was time to go to bed. He laid it by his bed-side, that he might see it the moment he awoke in the morning.

And now came the grand pleasure of

carrying it to his mistress. She looked full as much surprised as he expected, when she saw it, and when she heard who made it. After having duly admired it, she asked him how much he expected for his mat. "Expect!—Nothing, ma'am," said Jem; "I meant to give it you, if you'd have it; I did not mean to sell it. I made it at my playhours, and I was very happy making it; and I'm very glad too that you like it; and if you please to keep it, ma'am—that's all."—"But that's not all," said the lady. "Spend your time no more in weeding in my garden, you can employ yourself much better; you shall have the reward of your ingenuity as well as of your industry. Make as many more such mats as you can, and I will take care and dispose of them for you."—"Thank'e, ma'am," said Jem

making his best bow, for he thought by the lady's looks that she meant to do him a favour, though he repeated to himself, "Dispose of them; what does that mean?"

The next day he went to work to make more mats, and he soon learned to make them so well and quickly, that he was surprised at his own success. In every one he made he found less difficulty, so that, instead of making two, he could soon make four, in a day. In a fortnight he made eighteen. It was Saturday night when he finished, and he carried, at three journeys, his eighteen mats to his mistress's house; piled them all up in the hall, and stood with his hat off, with a look of proud humility, beside the pile, waiting for his mistress's appearance. Presently a folding door, at one end of the hall,

opened, and he saw his mistress, with a great many gentlemen and ladies rising from several tables.

"Oh! there is my little boy, and his mats," cried the lady; and, followed by all the rest of the company, she came into the hall. Jem modestly retired whilst they looked at his mats; but in a minute or two his mistress beckoned to him, and, when he came into the middle of the circle, he saw that his pile of mats had disappeared. "Well," said the lady smiling, "what do you see that makes you look so surprised?"—"That all my mats are gone," said Jem; "but you are very welcome."—"Are we?" said the lady; "well, take up your hat, and go home then, for you see that it is getting late, and you know "Lightfoot will wonder what's become of you." Jem turned

round to take up his hat, which he had left on the floor.

But how his countenance changed!—the hat was heavy with shillings. Every one who had taken a mat had put in two shillings; so that for the eighteen mats he had got thirty-six shillings. "Thirty-six shillings!" said the lady; "five and seven-pence I think you told me you had earned already—how much does that make? I must add, I believe, one other six-pence to make out your two guineas." — "Two guineas!" exclaimed Jem, now quite conquering his bashfulness, for at the moment he forgot where he was, and saw nobody that was by: "Two guineas!" cried he, clapping his hands together—"Oh Lightfoot!—oh mother!" Then, recollecting himself, he saw his mistress, whom he now looked

up to quite as a friend. "Will *you* thank them all," said he, scarcely daring to glance his eye round upon the company, "will *you* thank 'em, for you know I don't know how to thank 'em *rightly*." Every body thought, however, that they had been thanked *rightly*.

"Now we won't keep you any longer —only," said his mistress, "I have one thing to ask you, that I may be by when you show your treasure to your mother."—"Come, then," said Jem, "come with me now."—"Not now," said the lady laughing, "but I will come to Ashton to-morrow evening; perhaps your mother can find me a few strawberries."

"That she will," said Jem; "I'll search the garden myself." He now went home, but felt it a great restraint

to wait till to-morrow evening before he told his mother. To console himself he flew to the stable: "Lightfoot, you're not to be sold to-morrow! poor fellow," said he, patting him, and then could not refrain from counting out his money. Whilst he was intent upon this, Jem was startled by a noise at the door; somebody was trying to pull up the latch. It opened, and there came in Lazy Lawrence, with a boy in a red jacket, who had a cock under his arm. They started when they got into the middle of the stable, and when they saw Jem, who had been at first hidden by the horse.

"We—we—we came"—stammered Lazy Lawrence—"I mean, I came to—to—to—" "To ask you," continued the stable-boy in a bold tone, "whether you will go with us to the cock-fight on

Monday? See, I've a fine cock here, and Lawrence told me you were a great friend of his, so I came."

Lawrence now attempted to say something in praise of the pleasures of cock-fighting, and in recommendation of his new companion. But Jem looked at the stable-boy with dislike, and a sort of dread; then turning his eyes upon the cock with a look of compassion, said in a low voice to Lawrence, "Shall you like to stand by and see its eyes pecked out?"—"I don't know," said Lawrence, "as to that; but they say a cock-fight's a fine sight, and it's no more cruel in me to go than another; and a great many go; and I've nothing else to do, so I shall go."—"But I have something else to do," said Jem laughing, "so I shall not go."—"But," continued Lawrence, "you know Monday is the great

Bristol fair, and one must be merry then, of all days in the year."—"One day in the year, sure there's no harm in being merry," said the stable-boy. "I hope not," said Jem; "for I know, for my part, I am merry every day in the year."—"That's very odd," said Lawrence; "but I know, for my part, I would not for all the world miss going to the fair, for at least it will be something to talk of for half a year after;—come; you'll go, won't you?"—"No," said Jem, still looking as if he did not like to talk before the ill-looking stranger. "Then what will you do with all your money?"—"I'll tell you about that another time," whispered Jem; "and don't you go to see that cock's eyes pecked out; it won't make you merry, I'm sure."—"If I had any thing else to divert me—," said Lawrence, hesitating and yawning.—"Come," cried the

stable-boy, seizing his stretching arm, "come along," cried he; and, pulling him away from Jem, upon whom he cast a look of extreme contempt, "leave him alone, he's not the sort."—"What a fool you are!" said he to Lawrence, the moment he got him out of the stable, "you might have known he would not go—else we should soon have trimmed him out of his four and seven-pence. But how came you to talk of four and seven-pence; I saw in the manger a hat full of silver."—"Indeed!" exclaimed Lawrence. "Yes, indeed—but why did you stammer so when we first got in? you had like to have blown us all up."—"I was so ashamed," said Lawrence, hanging down his head. "Ashamed! but you must not talk of shame now you are in for it, and I sha'n't let you off: you owe

us half a crown, recollect, and I must be paid to-night; so see and get the money some how or other." After a considerable pause he added, "I'll answer for it he'd never miss half a crown out of all that silver."—"But to steal," said Lawrence, drawing back with horror—"I never thought I should come to that—and from poor Jem too—the money that he has worked so hard for too."—"But it is not stealing; we don't mean to steal; only to borrow it: and, if we win, as we certainly shall, at the cock-fight, pay it back again, and he'll never know any thing of the matter; and what harm will it do him? Besides, what signifies talking? you can't go to the cock-fight, or the fair either, if you don't; and I tell ye, we don't mean to steal it; we'll pay it again on Monday night." Lawrence made no reply, and they parted

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without his coming to any determination.

Here let us pause in our story—we are almost afraid to go on—the rest is very shocking—our little readers will shudder as they read. But it is better that they should know the truth, and see what the idle boy came to at last.

In the dead of the night Lawrence heard somebody tap at his window. He knew well who it was, for this was the signal agreed upon between him and his wicked companion. He trembled at the thoughts of what he was about to do, and lay quite still, with his head under the bed-clothes, till he heard the second tap. Then he got up, dressed himself, and opened his window. It was almost even with the ground. His companion said to him in a hollow voice, "Are you ready?" He made no an-

swer, but got out of the window and followed. When he got to the stable, a black cloud was just passing over the moon, and it was quite dark. "Where are you?" whispered Lawrence, groping about, "where are you? Speak to me." "I am here; give me your hand." Lawrence stretched out his hand. "Is that your hand?" said the wicked boy, as Lawrence laid hold of him; "how cold it felt!"—"Let us go back," said Lawrence; "it is time yet."—"It is no time to go back," replied the other, opening the door; "you've gone too far now to go back:" and he pushed Lawrence into the stable.—"Have you found it?—take care of the horse—have you done?—what are you about?—make haste, I hear a noise," said the stable-boy, who watched at the door. "I am feeling for the half-crown, but

I can't find it."—"Bring all together." He brought Jem's broken flower-pot, with all the money in it, to the door.

The black cloud was now passed over the moon, and the light shone full upon them.—"What do we stand here for?" said the stable-boy, snatching the flower-pot out of Lawrence's trembling hands, and pulled him away from the door. "Surely," cried Lawrence, "you won't take all!—You said, you'd only take half a crown, and pay it back on Monday—you said you'd only take half a crown!"—"Hold your tongue!" replied the other, walking on, deaf to all remonstrances—"if I am to be hanged ever, it sha'n't be for half a crown." Lawrence's blood ran cold in his veins, and he felt as if all his hair stood on end. Not another word passed. His accomplice carried off the money, and

Lawrence crept, with all the horrors of guilt upon him, to his restless bed. All night he was starting from frightful dreams; or else, broad awake, he lay listening to every small noise, unable to stir, and scarcely daring to breathe—tormented by that most dreadful of all kinds of fear, that fear which is the constant companion of an evil conscience. He thought the morning would never come; but when it was day, when he heard the birds sing, and saw every thing look cheerful as usual, he felt still more miserable. It was Sunday morning, and the bell rang for church. All the children of the village, dressed in their Sunday clothes, innocent and gay, and little Jem, the best and gayest amongst them, went flocking by his door to church. "Well, Lawrence," said Jem, pulling his coat as he passed,

and saw Lawrence leaning against his father's door, "what makes you look so black?" "I!" said Lawrence, starting, "why do you say that I look black?"—"Nay then," said Jem, "you look white enough now, if that will please you; for you're turned as pale as death."—"Pale!" replied Lawrence, not knowing what he said; and turned abruptly away, for he dared not stand another look of Jem's; conscious that guilt was written in his face, he shunned every eye. He would now have given the world to have thrown off the load of guilt which lay upon his mind; he longed to follow Jem, to fall upon his knees, and confess all: dreading the moment when Jem should discover his loss, Lawrence dared not stay at home; and not knowing what to do, or where to go, he mechanically went to his old haunt at the stable-yard, and lurked

thereabouts all day, with his accomplice, who tried in vain to quiet his fears and raise his spirits, by talking of the next day's cock-fight. It was agreed, that as soon as the dusk of the evening came on, they should go together into a certain lonely field, and there divide their booty.

In the mean time, Jem, when he returned from church, was very full of business, preparing for the reception of his mistress, of whose intended visit he had informed his mother; and, whilst she was arranging the kitchen and their little parlour, he ran to search the strawberry-beds. "Why, my Jem, how merry you are to-day!" said his mother when he came in with the strawberries, and was jumping about the room playfully. "Now keep those spirits of yours, Jem, till you want 'em, and don't let it come upon you all at once. Have it in mind

that to-morrow's fair-day, and Lightfoot must go. I bid farmer Truck call for him to-night; he said he'd take him along with his own, and he'll be here just now—and then I know how it will be with you, Jem!"—"So do I!" cried Jem, swallowing his secret with great difficulty, and then tumbling head over heels four times running. A carriage passed the window and stopped at the door. Jem ran out; it was his mistress. She came in smiling, and soon made the old woman smile too, by praising the neatness of every thing in the house. But we shall pass over, however important they were deemed at the time, the praises of the strawberries, and of "my grandmother's china plate." Another knock was heard at the door. "Run, Jem," said his mother, "I hope it's our milk-woman with cream for the

lady."—No; it was farmer Truck come for Lightfoot. The old woman's countenance fell. Fetch him out, dear," said she, turning to her son; but Jem was gone; he flew out to the stable the moment he saw the flap of farmer Truck's great-coat.—"Sit ye down, farmer," said the old woman, after they had waited about five minutes in expectation of Jem's return. "You'd best sit down, if the lady will give you leave; for he'll not hurry himself back again. My boy's a fool, madam, about that there horse." Trying to laugh, she added, "I knew how Lightfoot and he would be loath enough to part—he won't bring him out till the last minute; so do sit ye down, neighbour." The farmer had scarcely sat down, when Jem with a pale wild countenance, came back. "What's the

matter?" said his mistress. "God bless the boy!" said his mother, looking at him quite frightened, whilst he tried to speak, but could not. She went up to him, and then leaning his head against her, he cried, "It's gone!—it's all gone!" and, bursting into tears, he sobbed as if his little heart would break. "What's gone, love?" said his mother. "My two guineas—Lightfoot's two guineas. I went to fetch 'em to give you, mammy! but the broken flower-pot that I put them in, and all's gone! —quite gone!" repeated he, checking his sobs. "I saw them safe last night, and was showing 'em to Lightfoot; and I was so glad to think I had earned them all myself; and I thought how surprised you'd look, and how glad you'd be, and how you'd kiss me, and all!"

His mother listened to him with the

greatest surprise, whilst his mistress stood in silence, looking first at the old woman, and then at Jem, with a penetrating eye, as if she suspected the truth of his story, and was afraid of becoming the dupe of her own compassion. "This is a very strange thing!" said she gravely. "How came you to leave all your money in a broken flower-pot in the stable? How came you not to give it to your mother to take care of?"—"Why, don't you remember," said Jem, looking up in the midst of his tears; "why, don't you remember you your own self bid me not tell her about it till you were by."—"And did you not tell her?"—"Nay, ask mammy," said Jem, a little offended; and, when afterwards the lady went on questioning him in a severe manner, as if she did not believe him, he at last made no answer. "Oh, Jem!

Jem! why don't you speak to the lady?" said his mother. "I have spoke, and spoke the truth," said Jem, proudly, "and she did not believe me."

Still the lady, who had lived too long in the world to be without suspicion, maintained a cold manner, and determined to wait the event without interfering, saying only, that she hoped the money would be found; and advised Jem to have done crying. "I have done," said Jem, "I shall cry no more." And as he had the greatest command over himself, he actually did not shed another tear, not even when the farmer got up to go, saying, he could wait no longer. Jem silently went to bring out Lightfoot.—The lady now took her seat where she could see all that passed at the open parlour window.—The old woman stood at the door, and several

idle people of the village, who had gathered round the lady's carriage examining it, turned about to listen. In a minute or two Jem appeared, with a steady countenance, leading Lightfoot; and, when he came up, without saying a word, put the bridle into farmer Truck's hand. "He *has been* a good horse," said the farmer. "He *is* a good horse!" cried Jem, and threw his arm over Lightfoot's neck, hiding his own face as he leaned upon him.

At this instant a party of milk-women went by; and one of them having set down her pail, came behind Jem, and gave him a pretty smart blow upon the back.—He looked up.—"And don't you know me?" said she. "I forget," said Jem; "I think I have seen your face before, but I forget."—"Do you so? and you'll tell me just now,"

said she, half opening her hand, "that you forgot who gave you this, and who charged you not to part with it too." Here she quite opened her large hand, and on the palm of it appeared Jem's silver penny. "Where?" exclaimed Jem, seizing it, "oh where did you find it? and have you—oh tell me, have you got the rest of my money?"—"I don't know nothing of your money—I don't know what you would be at," said the milk-woman. "But where, pray tell me where, did you find this?"—"With them that you gave it to, I suppose," said the milk-woman, turning away suddenly to take up her milk-pail. But now Jem's mistress called to her through the window, begging her to stop, and joining in his entreaties to know how she came by the silver penny.

"Why, madam," said she, taking

up the corner of her apron, "I came by it in an odd way too—You must know my Betty is sick, so I come with the milk myself, though it's not what I'm used to; for my Betty—you know my Betty," said she, turning round to the old woman, "my Betty serves you, and she's a tight and stirring lassy, ma'am, I can assure—" "Yes, I don't doubt it," said the lady impatiently; "but about the silver penny?"—"Why, that's true; as I was coming along all alone, for the rest came a round, and I came a short cut across yon field—No, you can't see it, madam, where you stand—but if you were here—" "I see it—I know it," said Jem, out of breath with anxiety. "Well—well—I rested my pail upon the stile, and sets me down a while, and there comes out of the hedge—I don't know well how, for they

startled me so I'd like to have thrown down my milk—two boys, one about the size of he," said she, pointing to Jem, "and one a matter taller, but ill-looking like, so I did not think to stir to make way for them, and they were like in a desperate hurry: so, without waiting for the stile, one of 'em pulled at the gate, and when it would not open (for it was tied with a pretty stout cord), one of 'em whips out with his knife and cuts it——

"Now have you a knife about you, sir?" continued the milk-woman to the farmer. He gave her his knife.

"Here now, ma'am, just sticking as it were here, between the blade and the haft, was the silver-penny. He took no notice, but when he opened it, out it falls; still he takes no heed, but cuts the cord as I said before, and through

the gate they went, and out of sight in half a minute. I picks up the penny, for my heart misgave me that it was the very one husband had had a long time, and had given against my voice to he," pointing to Jem; "and I charged him not to part with it; and, ma'am, when I looked I knew it by the mark, so I thought I should show it to *he*," again pointing to Jem, "and let him give it back to those it belongs to."—"It belongs to me," said Jem; "I never gave it to any body—but—" "But," cried the farmer, "those boys have robbed him—it is they who have all his money."—"Oh, which way did they go?" cried Jem, "I'll run after them."

"No, no," said the lady, calling to her servant; and she desired him to take his horse and ride after them. "Aye," added farmer Truck, "do you take the

road, and I'll take the field-way, and I'll be bound we'll have 'em presently."

Whilst they were gone in pursuit of the thieves, the lady, who was now thoroughly convinced of Jem's truth, desired her coachman would produce what she had ordered him to bring with him that evening. Out of the boot of the carriage the coachman immediately produced a new saddle and bridle.

How Jem's eyes sparkled when the saddle was thrown upon Lightfoot's back! "Put it on your horse yourself, Jem," said the lady—"it is yours."

Confused reports of Lightfoot's splendid accoutrements, of the pursuit of the thieves, and of the fine and generous lady, who was standing at dame Preston's window, quickly spread through the village, and drew every body from their houses. They crowded round Jem

to hear the story. The children especially, who were all fond of him, expressed the strongest indignation against the thieves. Every eye was on the stretch; and now some, who had run down the lane, came back shouting, "Here they are! they've got the thieves!"

The footman on horseback carried one boy before him; and the farmer, striding along, dragged another. The latter had on a red jacket, which little Jem immediately recollected, and scarcely dared lift his eyes to look at the boy on horseback. "Astonishing!" said he to himself, "it must be—yet surely it can't be Lawrence!" The footman rode as fast as the people would let him. The boy's hat was slouched, and his head hung down, so that nobody could see his face.

At this instant there was a disturbance in the crowd. A man who was half drunk pushed his way forwards, swearing that nobody should stop him; that he had a right to see; and he *would* see. And so he did; for, forcing through all resistance, he staggered up to the footman just as he was lifting down the boy he had carried before him. "I *will*—I tell you, I *will* see the thief!" cried the drunken man, pushing up the boy's hat.—It was his own son.—"Lawrence!" exclaimed the wretched father. The shock sobered him at once, and he hid his face in his hands.

There was an awful silence. Lawrence fell on his knees, and in a voice that could scarcely be heard, made a full confession of all the circumstances of his guilt. "Such a young creature so wicked! What could put such

wickedness into your head?"—"Bad company," said Lawrence. "And how came you—what brought you into bad company?"—"I don't know—except it was idleness." While this was saying, the farmer was emptying Lazy Lawrence's pockets; and when the money appeared, all his former companions in the village looked at each other with astonishment and terror. Their parents grasped their little hands closer, and cried, "Thanks to Heaven! he is not my son—how often, when he was little, we used, as he lounged about, to tell him that idleness was the root of all evil!"

As for the hardened wretch, his accomplice, every one was impatient to have him sent to gaol. He had put on a bold, insolent countenance, till he heard Lawrence's confession; till the money was found upon him; and he

heard the milk-woman declare, that she would swear to the silver-penny which he had dropped. Then he turned pale, and betrayed the strongest signs of fear. "We must take him before the justice," said the farmer, "and he'll be lodged in Bristol gaol." "Oh!" said Jem, springing forwards when Lawrence's hands were going to be tied, "let him go—won't you—can't you, let him go?"—"Yes, madam, for mercy's sake," said Jem's mother to the lady, "think what a disgrace to his family to be sent to gaol!" His father stood by wringing his hands in an agony of despair. "It's all my fault," cried he: "I brought him up in *idleness*."—"But, he'll never be idle any more;" said Jem; "won't you speak for him, ma'am?"—"Don't ask the lady to speak for him," said the farmer; "it's better he should

go to Bridewell now, than to the gallows by-and-by."

Nothing more was said, for every body felt the truth of the farmer's speech. Lawrence was sent to Bride-well for a month, and the stable-bo was transported* to Botany Bay.

During Lawrence's confinement, Jem often visited him, and carried him such little presents as he could afford to give and Jem could afford to be *generous* because he was *industrious.* Lawrence heart was touched by his kindness, and his example struck him so forcibly, that when his confinement was ended, he re solved to set immediately to work; and to the astonishment of all who knew him soon became remarkable for industry; h was found early and late at his work established a new character, and for ev lost the name of *Lazy Lawrence.*

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

TARLTON.

Young Hardy was educated by Mr. Freeman, a very good master, at one of the Sunday-schools in ——shire. He was honest, obedient, active, and good-natured; so that he was esteemed and beloved by his master, and by his companions. Beloved by all his companions who were good, he did not desire to be loved by the bad; nor was he at all vexed or ashamed, when idle, mischievous, or dishonest boys attempted to plague or ridicule him. His friend Loveit, on the contrary, wished to be universally liked; and his highest ambition was to be thought the best-natured boy in the school:—and so he was. He usually went by the name of *poor Loveit*,

and every body pitied him when he got into disgrace, which he frequently did; for though he had a good disposition, he was often led to do things, which he knew to be wrong, merely because he could never have the courage to say, *no*; because he was afraid to offend the ill-natured, and could not bear to be laughed at by fools.

One fine autumn evening, all the boys were permitted to go out to play in a pleasant green meadow near the school. Loveit, and another boy called Tarlton, began to play a game at battledore and shuttlecock, and a large party stood by to look on; for they were the best players at battledore and shuttlecock in the school, and this was a trial of skill between them. When they had kept it up to three hundred and twenty, the game became very interesting: the arms

of the combatants grew so tired, that they could scarcely wield the battledores:—the shuttlecock began to waver in the air; now it almost touched the ground, and now, to the astonishment of the spectators, mounted again high over their heads; yet the strokes became feebler and feebler; and "Now Loveit!" "Now Tarlton!" resounded on all sides. For another minute the victory was doubtful; but at length, the setting sun shining full in Loveit's face so dazzled his eyes, that he could no longer see the shuttlecock, and it fell at his feet.

After the first shout for Tarlton's triumph was over, every body exclaimed, "Poor Loveit!"—"he's the best-natured fellow in the world!"—"what a pity that he did not stand with his back to the sun."

"Now I dare you all to play another game with me," cried Tarlton, vauntingly; and as he spoke, he tossed the shuttlecock up with all his force: with so much force, that it went over the hedge, and dropped into a lane, which went close behind the field. "Hey-day!" said Tarlton, "what shall we do now?"

The boys were strictly forbidden to go into the lane; and it was upon their promise not to break this command, that they were allowed to play in the adjoining field.

No other shuttlecock was to be had, and their play was stopped. They stood on the top of the bank peeping over the hedge. "I see it yonder," said Tarlton; "I wish any body would get it. One could get over the gate at the bottom of the field, and be back again in half a

minute," added he, looking at Loveit. "But you know we must not go into the lane," said Loveit, hesitatingly. "Pugh!" said Tarlton, "why now what harm could it do?"—"I don't know," said Loveit, drumming upon his battledore; "but—" "You don't know, man! why, then, what are you afraid of? I ask you." Loveit coloured, went on drumming, and again, in a lower voice, said "*he didn't know.*" But upon Tarlton's repeating, in a more insolent tone, "I ask you, man, what you're afraid of?" he suddenly left off drumming, and looking round, said, "he was not afraid of any thing that he knew of."—"Yes, but you are," said Hardy, coming forward. "Am I?" said Loveit; "of what, pray, am I afraid?" "Of doing wrong!" "Afraid *of doing wrong!*" repeated Tarlton mimicking

him, so that he made every body laugh. "Now had'nt you better say, afraid of being flogged?"—"No," said Hardy, coolly, after the laugh had somewhat subsided, "I am as little afraid of being flogged as you are, Tarlton; but I meant—" "No matter what you meant; why should you interfere with your wisdom, and your meanings; nobody thought of asking *you* to stir a step for us; but we asked Loveit, because he's the best fellow in the world."—"And for that very reason you should not ask him, because you know he can't refuse you any thing." "Indeed though," cried Loveit, piqued, "*there* you're mistaken, for I could refuse if I chose it." Hardy smiled; and Loveit, half afraid of his contempt, and half afraid of Tarlton's ridicule, stood doubtful, and again had recourse to his battledore, which he ba-

lanced most curiously upon his fore-finger. "Look at him!—now do look at him!" cried Tarlton; "did you ever in your life see any body look so silly!—Hardy has him quite under thumb; he's so mortally afraid of him, that he dare not turn either of his eyes from the tip of his nose; look how he squints!"—"I don't squint," said Loveit, looking up, "and nobody has me under his thumb; and what Hardy said, was only for fear I should get into disgrace:—he's the best friend I have." Loveit spoke this with more than usual spirit, for both his heart and his pride were touched. "Come along, then," said Hardy, taking him by the arm in an affectionate manner; and he was just going, when Tarlton called after him, "Ay, go along with its best friend, and take

care it does not get into a scrape;—good by, Little Panado!"—"Who do they call Little Panado?" said Loveit, turning his head hastily back. "Never mind," said Hardy, "what does it signify?"—"No," said Loveit, "to be sure it does not signify; but one does not like to be called Little Panado: besides," added he, after going a few steps further, "they'll all think it so ill-natured.—I had better go back, and just tell them, that I'm sorry I can't get their shuttlecock;—do come back with me."—"No," said Hardy, "I can't go "back: and you'd better not." "But, I assure you, I won't stay a minute; wait for me," added Loveit; and he slunk back again to prove that he was not Little Panado.

Once returned, the rest followed of course; for to support his character for

good-nature, he was obliged to yield to the entreaties of his companions, and to show his spirit, leaped over the gate, amidst the acclamations of the little mob:—he was quickly out of sight.

"Here," cried he, returning in about five minutes, quite out of breath, "I've got the shuttlecock; and I'll tell you what I've seen," cried he, panting for breath. "What?" cried every body, eagerly. "Why, just at the turn of the corner, at the end of the lane," panting. "Well," said Tarlton, impatiently, "do go on,"—"Let me just take breath first." "Pugh! never mind your breath"—"Well, then, just at the turn of the corner, at the end of the lane, as I was looking about for the shuttlecock, I heard a great rustling somewhere near me, and so I looked where it could come from; and I saw in

a nice little garden, on the opposite side of the way, a boy, about as big as Tarlton, sitting in a great tree, shaking the branches; and at every shake down there came such a shower of fine large rosy apples, they made my mouth water; so I called to the boy, to beg one; but he said, he could not give me one, for that they were his grandfather's, and just at that minute, from behind a gooseberry-bush, up popped the uncle—the grandfather poked his head out of the window; so I ran off as fast as my legs would carry me, though I heard him bawling after me all the way.

"And let him bawl," cried Tarlton, "he shan't bawl for nothing; I'm determined we'll have some of his fine large rosy apples before I sleep to-night."—At this speech a general silence ensued; every body kept their eyes fixed

upon Tarlton, except Loveit, who looked down, apprehensive that he should be drawn on much farther than he intended.—"Oh, indeed!" said he to himself, "as Hardy told me, I had better not have come back."

Regardless of this confusion, Tarlton continued, "But before I say any more, I hope we have no spies amongst us. If there is any one of you afraid to be flogged, let him march off this instant!"—Loveit coloured, bit his lips, wished to go, but had not courage to move first.—He waited to see what every body else would do;—nobody stirred;—so Loveit stood still.

"Well, then," cried Tarlton, giving his hand to the boy next him, then to the next, "your word and honour that you won't betray me; but stand by me, and I'll stand by you." Each boy gave

his hand, and his promise; repeating, "stand by me, and I'll stand by you."— Loveit hung back till the last; and had almost twisted off the button of the boy's coat who screened him, when Tarlton came up, holding out his hand, "Come, Loveit, lad, you're in for it: stand by me, and I'll stand by you."— "Indeed, Tarlton," expostulated he, without looking him in the face, "I do wish you'd give up this scheme; I dare say all the apples are gone by this time;— I wish you would—Do, pray, give up this scheme."—"What scheme, man! you hav'n't heard it yet, you may as well know your text before you begin preaching." The corners of Loveit's mouth could not refuse to smile, though in his heart he felt not the slightest inclination to laugh. "Why I don't know you, I declare I don't know you to-day," said

Tarlton; "you used to be the best-natured, most agreeable lad in the world, and would do any thing one asked you; but you're quite altered of late, as we were saying just now, when you sculked away with Hardy: come, do man, pluck up a little spirit, and be one of us, or you'll make us all *hate you*."—"*Hate* me!" repeated Loveit, with terror; "no, surely, you won't all *hate* me!" and he mechanically stretched out his hand, which Tarlton shook violently, saying, *Ay, now, that's right*."—"*Ay, now, that's wrong!*" whispered Loveit's conscience; but his conscience was of no use to him, for it was always overpowered by the voice of numbers; and though he had the wish, he never had the power, to do right. "Poor Loveit! I knew he would not refuse us," cried his companions; and even Tarlton, the

moment he shook hands with him, despised him. It is certain, that weakness of mind is despised both by the good and by the bad.

The league being thus formed, Tarlton assumed all the airs of a commander, explained his schemes, and laid the plan of attack upon the poor old man's apple-tree. It was the only one he had in the world. We shall not dwell upon their consultation, for the amusement of contriving such expeditions is often the chief thing which induces idle boys to engage in them.

There was a small window at the end of the back staircase, through which, between nine and ten o'clock at night, Tarlton, accompanied by Loveit and another boy, crept out. It was a moonlight night, and, after crossing the field, and climbing the gate, directed by

Loveit, who now resolved to go through the affair with spirit, they proceeded down the lane with rash, yet fearful steps. At a distance Loveit saw the white-washed cottage, and the apple-tree beside it: they quickened their pace, and with some difficulty scrambled through the hedge which fenced the garden, though not without being scratched and torn by the briers. Every thing was silent. Yet now and then at every rustling of the leaves they started, and their hearts beat violently. Once as Loveit was climbing the apple-tree, he thought he heard a door in the cottage open, and earnestly begged his companions to desist and return home. This however he could by no means persuade them to do, until they had filled their pockets with apples; then, to his great joy, they returned, crept in at the

staircase window, and each retired, as softly as possible, to his own apartment.

Loveit slept in the room with Hardy, whom he had left fast asleep, and whom he now was extremely afraid of wakening. All the apples were emptied out of Loveit's pockets, and lodged with Tarlton till the morning, for fear the smell should betray the secret to Hardy. The room door was apt to creak, but it was opened with such precaution, that no noise could be heard, and Loveit found his friend as fast asleep as when he left him.

"Ah," said he to himself, "how quietly he sleeps! I wish I had been sleeping too." The reproaches of Loveit's conscience, however, served no other purpose but to torment him; he had not sufficient strength of mind to be good. The very next night, in spite of all his

fears, and all his penitence, and all his resolutions, by a little fresh ridicule and persuasion he was induced to accompany the same party on a similar expedition. We must observe, that the necessity for continuing their depredations became stronger the third day; for though at first only a small party had been in the secret, by degrees it was divulged to the whole school: and it was necessary to secure secrecy by sharing the booty.

Every one was astonished that Hardy, with all his quickness and penetration, had not yet discovered their proceedings; but Loveit could not help suspecting, that he was not quite so ignorant as he appeared to be. Loveit had strictly kept his promise of secrecy, but he was by no means an artful boy; and in talking to his friend, conscious that he had something to conceal, he was perpe-

tually on the point of betraying himself; then recollecting his engagement, he blushed, stammered, bungled; and upon Hardy's asking what he meant, would answer with a silly guilty countenance, that he did not know; or abruptly break off, saying, Oh nothing! nothing at all!

It was in vain that he urged Tarlton to permit him to consult his friend; a gloom overspread Tarlton's brow when he began to speak on the subject, and he always returned a peremptory refusal, accompanied with some such taunting expression as this—"I wish we had nothing to do with such a sneaking fellow. He'll betray us all, I see, before we have done with him."—"Well," said Loveit to himself, "so I am abused after all, and called a sneaking fellow for my pains; that's rather hard to be sure, when I've got so little by the job."

In truth he had not got much, for in the division of the booty only one apple, and a half of another which was only half ripe, happened to fall to his share; though, to be sure, when they had all eaten their apples, he had the satisfaction to hear every body declare they were very sorry they had forgotten to offer some of theirs to "*poor Loveit!*"

In the mean time the visits to the apple-tree had been now too frequently repeated to remain concealed from the old man, who lived in the cottage. He used to examine his only tree very frequently, and missing numbers of rosy apples which he had watched ripening, he, though not much prone to suspicion, began to think that there was something going wrong; especially as a gap was made in his hedge, and there were several small footsteps in his flower-beds.

The good old man was not at all inclined to give pain to any living creature, much less to children, of whom he was particularly fond. Nor was he in the least avaricious; for though he was not rich, he had enough to live upon, because he had been very industrious in his youth; and he was always very ready to part with the little he had; nor was he a cross old man. If any thing would have made him angry, it would have been the seeing his favourite tree robbed, as he had promised himself the pleasure of giving his red apples to his grand-children on his birth-day. However, he looked up at the tree in sorrow rather than in anger, and leaning upon his staff, he began to consider what he had best do.

"If I complain to their master," said he to himself, "they will certainly be

flogged, and that I should be sorry for; yet they must not be let to go on stealing, that would be worse still, for that would surely bring them to the gallows in the end. Let me see—oh, ay, that will do; I will borrow farmer Kent's dog Barker, he'll keep them off, I'll answer for it."

Farmer Kent lent his dog Barker, cautioning his neighbour at the same time, to be sure to chain him well, for he was the fiercest mastiff in England. The old man, with farmer Kent's assistance, chained him fast to the trunk of the apple-tree.

Night came, and Tarlton, Loveit, and his companions, returned at the usual hour. Grown bolder now by frequent success, they came on talking and laughing. But the moment they had set their foot in the garden, the dog

started up; and, shaking his chain as he sprang forward, barked with unremitting fury. They stood still as if fixed to the spot. There was just moonlight enough to see the dog. "Let us try the other side of the tree," said Tarlton. But to whichever side they turned, the dog flew round in an instant, barking with increased fury.

"He'll break his chain and tear us to pieces," cried Tarlton: and, struck with terror, he immediately threw down the basket he had brought with him, and betook himself to flight with the greatest precipitation.—"Help me! oh, pray, help me! I can't get through the hedge," cried Loveit in a lamentable tone, whilst the dog growled hideously, and sprang forward to the extremity of his chain.—"I can't get out! Oh,

pray, dear Tarlton, stay for me one minute!"

He called in vain, he was left to struggle through his difficulties by himself; and of all his dear friends, not one turned back to help him. At last, torn and terrified, he got through the hedge and ran home, despising his companions for their selfishness. Nor could he help observing, that Tarlton, with all his vaunted prowess, was the first to run away from the appearance of danger. The next morning he could not help reproaching the party with their conduct.—"Why could not you, any of you, stay one minute to help me?" said he. "We did not hear you call," answered one. "I was so frightened," said another, "I would not have turned back for the whole world."—"And you, Tarlton?"—"I!" said Tarlton. "Had

not I enough to do to take care of myself, you blockhead? Every one for himself in this world!" "So I see," said Loveit, gravely. "Well, man! is there any thing strange in that?"—"Strange! why yes, I thought you all loved me?" "Lord, love you, lad! so we do; but we love ourselves better." —"Hardy would not have served me so, however," said Loveit, turning away in disgust. Tarlton was alarmed; —"Pugh!" said he, "what nonsense have you taken into your brain? Think no more about it. We are all very sorry, and beg your pardon; come, shake hands, forgive and forget." Loveit gave his hand, but gave it rather coldly: —"I forgive it with all my heart," said he, "but I cannot forget it so soon!" —"Why, then, you are not such a good-humoured fellow as we thought you

were. Surely you cannot bear malice, Loveit?" Loveit smiled, and allowed that he certainly could not bear malice. "Well then, come; you know at the bottom we all love you, and would do any thing in the world for you." Poor Loveit, flattered in his foible, began to believe that they did love him at the bottom, as they said, and even with his eyes open consented again to be duped.

"How strange it is," thought he, "that I should set such value upon the love of those I despise! When I'm once out of this scrape, I'll have no more to do with them, I'm determined."

Compared with his friend Hardy, his new associates did indeed appear contemptible: for all this time Hardy had treated him with uniform kindness, avoided to pry into his secrets, yet

seemed ready to receive his confidence, if it had been offered.

After school in the evening, as he was standing silently beside Hardy, who was ruling a sheet of paper for him, Tarlton, in his brutal manner came up, and seizing him by the arm, cried, "Come along with me, Loveit, I've something to say to you."—"I can't come now," said Loveit, drawing away his arm.—"Ah, do come now," said Tarlton in a voice of persuasion. "Well, I'll come presently."—"Nay, but do, pray; there's a good fellow, come now, because I've something to say to you."—"What is it you've got to say to me? I wish you'd let me alone," said Loveit; yet at the same time he suffered himself to be led away.

Tarlton took particular pains to humour him and bring him into temper

again; and even though he was not very apt to part with his play-things, went so far as to say, "Loveit, the other day you wanted a top; I'll give you mine, if you desire it." Loveit thanked him, and was overjoyed at the thoughts of possessing this top. "But what did you want to say to me just now?"—"Aye, we'll talk of that presently—not yet—when we get out of hearing."—"Nobody is near us," said Loveit.—"Come a little farther, however," said Tarlton, looking round suspiciously.—"Well now, well?" "You know the dog that frightened us so last night?"—"Yes."—"It will never frighten us again."—"Won't it?—how so?"—"Look here," said Tarlton, drawing from his pocket something wrapped in a blue handkerchief. "What's that?" Tarlton opened it.—"Raw meat!" ex-

claimed Loveit. "How came you by it?"—"Tom, the servant boy, Tom got it for me, and I'm to give him sixpence."—"And is it for the dog?"—"Yes; I vowed I'd be revenged on him, and after all this he'll never bark again."—"Never bark again!—What do you mean?—Is it poison?" exclaimed Loveit, starting back with horror. "Only poison for *a dog*," said Tarlton, confused; "you could not look more shocking if it was poison for a Christian." Loveit stood for nearly a minute in profound silence. "Tarlton," said he, at last, in a changed tone and altered manner, "I did not know you; I will have no more to do with you."—"Nay, but stay," said Tarlton, catching hold of his arm, "stay; I was only joking."—"Let go my arm, you were in earnest."—"But then that was before I knew

there was any harm. If you think there's any harm!"—"*If*," said Loveit. "Why you know, I might not know; for Tom told me it's a thing that's often done; ask Tom."—"I'll ask nobody! surely we know better what's right and wrong than Tom does."—"But only just ask him, to hear what he'll say."—"I don't want to hear what he'll say," cried Loveit vehemently. "The dog will die in agonies—in horrid agonies! There was a dog poisoned at my father's, I saw him in the yard.—Poor creature! he lay, and howled, and writhed himself!" "Poor creature! Well, there's no harm done now," cried Tarlton, in a hypocritical tone. But though he thought fit to dissemble with Loveit, he was thoroughly determined in his purpose.

Poor Loveit, in haste to get away, returned to his friend Hardy; but his

mind was in such agitation, that he neither talked nor moved like himself; and two or three times his heart was so full that he was ready to burst into tears.

"How good-natured you are to me," said he to Hardy, as he was trying vainly to entertain him; "but if you knew—." Here he stopped short, for the bell for evening-prayer rang, and they all took their places, and knelt down. After prayers, as they were going to bed, Loveit stopped Tarlton—*Well!*" asked he, in an inquiring manner, fixing his eyes upon him;—*Well!*" replied Tarlton in an audacious tone, as if he meant to set his inquiring eye at defiance;—"what do you mean to do to-night?"—"To go to sleep, as you do, I suppose," replied Tarlton, turning away abruptly, and whistling as he walked off.

"Oh, he has certainly changed his mind!" said Loveit to himself, "else he could not whistle." About ten minutes after this, as he and Hardy were undressing, Hardy suddenly recollected that he had left his new kite out upon the grass. "Oh," said he, "it will be quite spoiled before morning!"—"Call Tom," said Loveit, "and bid him bring it in for you in a minute." They both went to the top of the stairs to call Tom; no one answered. They called again louder, "Is Tom below?"—"I'm here," answered he at last, coming out of Tarlton's room with a look of mixed embarrassment and effrontery. And as he was receiving Hardy's commission, Loveit saw the corner of the blue handkerchief hanging out of his pocket. This excited fresh suspicions in Loveit's mind; but, without saying one word,

he immediately stationed himself at the window in his room, which looked out towards the lane; and as the moon was risen, he could see if any one passed that way. "What are you doing there?" said Hardy, after he had been watching some time; "why don't you come to bed?" Loveit returned no answer, but continued standing at the window. Nor did he watch long in vain; presently he saw Tom gliding slowly along a by-path, and get over the gate into the lane.

"He's gone to do it!" exclaimed Loveit aloud, with an emotion which he could not command. "Who's gone! to do what?" cried Hardy, starting up. "How cruel, how wicked!" continued Loveit. "What's cruel—what's wicked? speak out at once!" returned Hardy, in that commanding tone, which, in moments of danger, strong minds feel

themselves entitled to assume towards weak ones. Loveit instantly, though in an incoherent manner, explained the affair to him. Scarcely had the words passed his lips, when Hardy sprang up, and began dressing himself without saying one syllable. "For God's sake, what are you going to do?" said Loveit in great anxiety. "They'll never forgive me! don't betray me! they'll never forgive me! pray speak to me! only say you won't betray us."—"I will not betray you, trust to me," said Hardy; and he left the room, and Loveit stood in amazement: whilst, in the mean time, Hardy, in hopes of overtaking Tom before the fate of the poor dog was decided, ran with all possible speed across the meadow, and then down the lane. He came up with Tom just as he was climbing the bank into the old man's

garden. Hardy, too much out of breath to speak, seized hold of him, dragged him down, detaining him with a firm grasp whilst he panted for utterance—"What, master Hardy, is it you? what's the matter? what do you want?"—"I want the poisoned meat that you have in your pocket."—"Who told you that I had any such thing!" said Tom, clapping his hand upon his guilty pocket. "Give it me quietly, and I'll let you off."—"Sir, upon my word I haven't! I didn't! I don't know what you mean," said Tom trembling, though he was by far the strongest of the two; "indeed I don't know what you mean."—"You do," said Hardy, with great indignation; and a violent struggle immediately commenced. The dog, now alarmed by the voices, began to bark outrageously. Tom was terrified lest the old man should

come out to see what was the matter; his strength forsook him, and flinging the handkerchief and meat over the hedge, he ran away with all his speed. The handkerchief fell within the reach of the dog, who instantly snapped at it; luckily it did not come untied. Hardy saw a pitchfork on a dunghill close beside him, and seizing upon it, stuck it into the handkerchief. The dog pulled, tore, growled, grappled, yelled; it was impossible to get the handkerchief from between his teeth; but the knot was loosed, the meat unperceived by the dog dropped out, and while he dragged off the handkerchief in triumph, Hardy with inexpressible joy plunged the pitchfork into the poisoned meat, and bore it away.

Never did hero retire with more satisfaction from a field of battle. Full of

the pleasure of successful benevolence, Hardy tripped joyfully home, and vaulted over the window-sill, when the first object he beheld was Mr. Power, the usher, standing at the head of the stairs, with a candle in his hand.

"Come up, whoever you are," said Mr. William Power, in a stern voice; I thought I should find you out at last. Come up, whoever you are!" Hardy obeyed without reply.—"Hardy!" exclaimed Mr. Power, starting back with astonishment; "is it you, Mr. Hardy?" repeated he, holding the light to his face. "Why, sir," said he in a sneering tone, "I'm sure, if Mr. Trueman was here, he wouldn't believe his own eyes; but for my part, I saw through you long since; I never liked saints, for my share. Will you please to do me the favour, sir, if it is not too much trou-

ble, to empty your pockets.—Hardy obeyed in silence. "Heyday! meat! raw meat! what next?"—"That's all," said Hardy, emptying his pockets inside out. "This is *all*," said Mr. Power, taking up the meat.—"Pray, sir," said Hardy, eagerly, "let that meat be burned, it is poisoned."—"Poisoned!" cried Mr. William Power, letting it drop out of his fingers; "you wretch!" looking at him with a menacing air, "what is all this? Speak." Hardy was silent. "Why don't you speak?" cried he, shaking him by the shoulder impatiently. Still Hardy was silent. "Down upon your knees this minute, and confess all; tell me where you've been, what you've been doing, and who are your accomplices, for I know there is a gang of you: so," added he, pressing heavily upon Hardy's shoulder, "down upon

your knees this minute, and confess the whole; that's your only way now to get off yourself. If you hope for *my* pardon, I can tell you it's not to be had without asking for."—"Sir," said Hardy, in a firm but respectful voice, "I have no pardon to ask, I have nothing to confess, I am innocent; but if I were not, I would never try to get off myself by betraying my companions."—"Very well, sir! very well! very fine! stick to it, stick to it, I advise you—and we shall see. And how will you look to-morrow, Mr. Innocent, when my uncle the Doctor comes home?"—"As I do now, sir," said Hardy unmoved. His composure threw Mr. Power into a rage too great for utterance. "Sir," continued Hardy, "ever since I have been at school, I never told a lie, and therefore, sir, I hope you will believe me

now. Upon my word and honour, sir, I have done nothing wrong."—"Nothing wrong? Better and better! what, when I catched you going out at night?"—"*That* to be sure was wrong," said Hardy, recollecting himself; "but except that——" "Except that, sir! I will except nothing. Come along with me, young gentleman; your time for pardon is past." Saying these words, he pulled Hardy along a narrow passage to a small closet, set apart for desperate offenders, and usually known by the name of the *Black Hole.* "There, sir, take up your lodging there for to-night," said he, pushing him in; "to-morrow I'll know more, or I'll know why," added he, double-locking the door, with a tremendous noise, upon his prisoner, and locking also the door at the end of the passage, so that no one could have

access to him. "So now I think I have you safe!" said Mr. William Power to himself, stalking off with steps which made the whole gallery resound, and which made many a guilty heart tremble. The conversation which had passed between Hardy and Mr. Power at the head of the stairs had been anxiously listened to, but only a word or two here and there had been distinctly overheard.—The locking of the black-hole door was a terrible sound—some knew not what it portended, and others knew *too well*; all assembled in the morning with faces of anxiety. Tarlton's and Loveit's were the most agitated. Tarlton for himself; Loveit for his friend, for himself, for every body. Every one of the party, and Tarlton at their head, surrounded him with reproaches; and considered him as the author of the evils which

hung over them. "How could you do so? and why did you say any thing to Hardy about it? when you had promised too!—Oh what shall we all do! what a scrape you have brought us into! Loveit, it's all your fault!" "*All my fault!*" repeated poor Loveit, with a sigh; "well, that is hard."

"Goodness! there's the bell," exclaimed a number of voices at once. "Now for it!" They all stood in a half circle for morning prayers! they listened, "Here he is coming! No—Yes—Here he is!" And Mr. William Power, with a gloomy brow, appeared and walked up to his place at the head of the room. They knelt down to prayers; and the moment they rose, Mr. William Power, laying his hand upon the table, cried, "Stand still, gentlemen, if you please." Every body stood

stock still; he walked out of the circle; they guessed that he was gone for Hardy, and the whole room was in commotion. Each with eagerness asked each what none could answer, "*Has he told?*" —"*What* has he told?"—"Who has he told of?"—"I hope he has not told of me?" cried they. "I'll answer for it he has told of all of us," said Tarlton. "And I'll answer for it he has told of none of us," answered Loveit, with a sigh. "You don't think he's such a fool, when he can get himself off," said Tarlton.

At this instant the prisoner was led in, and as he passed through the circle, every eye was fixed upon him; his eye turned upon no one, not even upon Loveit, who pulled him by the coat as he passed—every one felt almost afraid to breathe. —"Well, sir," said Mr. Power, sitting

down in Mr. Trueman's elbow-chair, and placing the prisoner opposite to him; "well, sir, what have you to say to me this morning?"—"Nothing, sir," answered Hardy, in a decided yet modest manner; "nothing but what I said last night." "Nothing more?" "Nothing more, sir."—"But I have something more to say to you, sir, then; and a great deal more, I promise you, before I have done with you; and then, seizing him in a fury, he was just going to give him a severe flogging, when the school-room door opened, and Mr. Trueman appeared, followed by an old man whom Loveit immediately knew. He leaned upon his stick as he walked, and in his other hand carried a basket of apples. When they came within the circle, Mr. Trueman stopped short—"Hardy!" exclaimed he, with a voice

of unfeigned surprise, whilst Mr. William Power stood with his hand suspended. "Aye, Hardy, sir," repeated he. "I told him you'd not believe your own eyes."—Mr. Trueman advanced with a slow step. "Now, sir, give me leave," said the usher, eagerly drawing him aside, and whispering.— "So, sir," said Mr. T. when the whisper was done, addressing himself to Hardy with a voice and manner, which, had he been guilty, must have pierced him to the heart, "I find I have been deceived in you—it is but three hours ago that I told your uncle I never had a boy in my school in whom I placed so much confidence; but, after all this show of honour and integrity, the moment my back is turned, you are the first to set an example of disobedience to my orders. Why do I talk of disobeying my com-

mands—you are a thief!"—"I, sir!" exclaimed Hardy, no longer able to repress his feelings.—"You, sir,—you and some others," said Mr. Trueman, looking round the room with a penetrating glance—"you and some others—' "Aye, sir," interrupted Mr. William Power, "get that out of him if you can—ask him."—"I will ask him nothing; I shall neither put his truth nor his honour to the trial; truth and honour are not to be expected amongst thieves."—"I am not a thief! I have never had any thing to do with thieves," cried Hardy, indignantly. "Have not you robbed this old man? don't you know the taste of these apples?" said Mr. Trueman, taking one out of the basket. "No, sir, I do not; I never touched one of that old man's apples." —"Never touched one of them! I sup-

pose this is some vile equivocation; you have done worse, you have had the barbarity, the baseness, to attempt to poison his dog; the poisoned meat was found in your pocket last night."—"The poisoned meat was found in my pocket, sir! but I never attempted to poison the dog; I saved his life."—"Lord bless him," said the old man. "Nonsense! cunning!" said Mr. Power. "I hope you won't let him impose upon you so, sir." "No, he cannot impose upon me; I have a proof he is little prepared for," said Mr. Trueman, producing the blue handkerchief in which the meat had been wrapped.

Tarlton turned pale; Hardy's countenance never changed. "Don't you know this handkerchief, sir?"—"I do, sir."—"Is it not yours?"—"No, sir."—"Don't you know whose it is?" cried Mr. Power. Hardy was silent.

"Now, gentlemen," said Mr. Trueman, "I am not fond of punishing you; but when I do it, you know it is always in earnest. I will begin with the eldest of you; I will begin with Hardy, and flog you with my own hands till this handkerchief is owned." "I'm sure it's not mine;" "and I'm sure it's none of mine;" burst from every mouth, whilst they looked at each other in dismay, for none but Hardy, Loveit, and Tarlton, knew the secret.—"My cane!" said Mr. Trueman, and Power handed him the cane—Loveit groaned from the bottom of his heart—Tarlton leaned back against the wall with a black countenance—Hardy looked with a steady eye at the cane.

"But first," said Mr. Trueman, laying down the cane, "let us see; perhaps we may find out the owner of this hand-

kerchief another way," examining the corners; it was torn almost to pieces, but luckily the corner that was marked remained.

"J. T.!" cried Mr. Trueman. Every eye turned upon the guilty Tarlton, who, now, as pale as ashes, and trembling in every limb, sank down upon his knees, and in a whining voice begged for mercy. "Upon my word and honour, sir, I'll tell you all; I should never have thought of stealing the apples if Loveit had not first told me of them; and it was Tom who first put the poisoning the dog into my head: it was he that carried the meat; *wasn't it?*" said he, appealing to Hardy, whose word he knew must be believed—"Oh, dear sir!" continued he, as Mr. Trueman began to move towards him, "do let me off—do pray let me off this time!

I'm not the only one indeed, sir! I hope you won't make me an example for the rest—It's very hard I'm to be flogged more than they!"—"I'm not going to flog you."—"Thank you, sir," said Tarlton, getting up and wiping his eyes. "You need not thank me," said Mr. Trueman. "Take your handkerchief—go out of this room—out of this house—let me never see you more."

"If I had any hopes of him," said Mr. Trueman, as he shut the door after him; "if I had any hopes of him, I would have punished him: but I have none—punishment is meant only to make people better; and those who have any hopes of themselves will know how to submit to it."

At these words Loveit first, and immediately all the rest of the guilty party, stepped out of the ranks, confessed their

fault, and declared themselves ready to bear any punishment their master thought proper.—"Oh, they have been punished enough," said the old man; "forgive them, sir."

Hardy looked as if he wished to speak.

"Not because you ask it," said Mr. Trueman; "though I should be glad to oblige you—it wouldn't be just—but there (pointing to Hardy), there is one who has merited a reward; the highest I can give him is the pardon of his companions."

Hardy bowed, and his face glowed with pleasure, whilst every body present sympathised in his feelings.—"I am sure," thought Loveit, "this is a lesson I shall never forget."

"Gentlemen," said the old man with a faltering voice, "it wasn't for the

sake of my apples that I spoke; and you, sir," said he to Hardy, " I thank you for saving my dog. If you please, I'll plant on that mount, opposite the window, a young apple-tree, from my old one; I will water it, and take care of it with my own hands for your sake, as long as I am able.—And may God bless you! (laying his trembling hand on Hardy's head) may God bless you—I'm sure God *will* bless all such boys as you are."

THE

FALSE KEY.

Mr. Spencer, a very benevolent and sensible man, undertook the education of several poor children. Amongst the rest was a boy of the name of Franklin, whom he had bred up from the time he was five years old. Franklin had the misfortune to be the son of a man of infamous character; and for many years this was a disgrace and reproach to his child. When any of the neighbours' children quarrelled with him, they used to tell him he would turn out like his father. But Mr. Spencer always assured him, that he might make himself whatever he pleased; that by behaving well he would certainly, sooner or later, se-

cure the esteem and love of all who knew him, even of those who had the strongest prejudice against him on his father's account.

This hope was very delightful to Franklin, and he showed the strongest desire to learn to do every thing that was right; so that Mr. Spencer soon grew fond of him, and took great pains to instruct him, and to give him all the good habits and principles which might make him a useful, respectable, and happy man.

When he was about thirteen years of age, Mr. Spencer one day sent for him into his closet; and as he was folding up a letter which he had been writing, said to him with a very kind look, but in a graver tone than usual, "Franklin, you are going to leave me."—"Sir!" said Franklin. "You are now going

to leave me, and to begin the world for yourself. You will carry this letter to my sister, Mrs. Churchill, in Queen's Square—you know Queen's Square—" Franklin bowed. "You must expect," continued Mr. Spencer, "to meet with several disagreeable things, and a great deal of rough work, at your first setting out; but be faithful and obedient to your mistress, and obliging to your fellow-servants, and all will go well. Mrs. Churchill will make you a very good mistress if you behave properly, and I have no doubt but you will."—"Thank you, sir."—"And you will always (I mean as long as you deserve it) find a friend in me."—"Thank you, sir—I am sure you are—" There Franklin stopped short, for the recollection of all Mr. Spencer's goodness rushed upon him at once, and he could not say an-

other word. "Bring me a candle to seal this letter," said his master; and he was very glad to get out of the room. He came back with the candle, and with a stout heart stood by whilst the letter was sealing; and when his master put it into his hand, said, in a cheerful voice, "I hope you will let me see you again, sir, sometimes."—"Certainly: whenever your mistress can spare you I shall be very glad to see you; and, remember, if ever you get into any difficulty, don't be afraid to come to me. I have sometimes spoken harshly to you, but you will not meet with a more indulgent friend." Franklin at this turned away with a full heart; and, after making two or three attempts to express his gratitude, left the room without being able to speak.

He got to Queen's Square about

three o'clock. The door was opened by a large red-faced man in a blue coat and scarlet waistcoat, to whom he felt afraid to give his message, lest he should not be a servant. "Well, what's your business, sir?" said the butler. "I have a letter for Mrs. Churchill, *sir*," said Franklin, endeavouring to pronounce his *sir* in a tone as respectful as the butler's was insolent. The man having examined the direction, seal, and edges of the letter, carried it up stairs, and in a few minutes returned, and ordered Franklin to rub his shoes well and follow him. He was then shown into a handsome room, where he found his mistress, an elderly lady. She asked him a few questions, examining him attentively as she spoke; and her severe eye at first, and her gracious smile afterwards, made him feel that

she was a person to be both loved and feared. "I shall give you in charge," said she, ringing a bell, "to my housekeeper, and I hope she will have no reason to be displeased with you."

The housekeeper, when she first came in, appeared with a smiling countenance; but the moment she cast her eyes on Franklin, it changed to a look of surprise and suspicion. Her mistress recommended him to her protection, saying, "Pomfret, I hope you will keep this boy under your own eye." And she received him with a cold "Very well, ma'am;" which plainly showed she was not disposed to like him. In fact, Mrs. Pomfret was a woman so fond of power, and so jealous of favour, that she would have quarrelled with an angel who had gotten so near her mistress without her introduction. She smothered her displea-

sure, however, till night; when, as she attended her mistress's toilette, she could not refrain from expressing her sentiments. She began cautiously; Ma'am, is not this the boy Mr. Spencer was talking of one day—that had been brought up by the *Villaintropic Society*, I think they call it?"—"Philanthropic Society; yes; and my brother gives him a high character: I hope he will do very well." —"I'm sure I hope so too; but I can't say; for my part, I've no great notion of those low people. They say all those children are taken from the very lowest *drugs* and *refugees* of the town, and surely they are like enough, ma'am, to take after their own fathers and mothers."—"But they are not suffered to be with their parents, and therefore cannot be hurt by their example. This little boy to be sure was unfortunate in his

father, but he has had an excellent education."—"Oh, *edication!* to be sure, ma'am, I know—I don't say but what *edication* is a great thing. But then, ma'am, *edication* can't change the *natur* that's in one, they say; and one that's born naturally bad and low, they say, all the *edication* in the world won't do no good; and, for my part, ma'am, I know you knows best, but I should be afraid to let any of those *Villaintropic* folks get into my house, for nobody can tell the *natur* of them before-hand: I declare it frights me."—"Pomfret, I thought you had better sense: how could this poor boy earn his bread? he would be forced to starve, or steal, if every body had such prejudices." Pomfret, who really was a good woman, was softened at this idea, and said, "God forbid he should starve, or steal; and God forbid

I should say any thing *prejudiciary* of the boy, for there may be no harm in him."—"Well," said Mrs. Churchill, changing her tone, "but, Pomfret, if we don't like the boy at the end of a month, we have done with him; for I have only promised Mr. Spencer to keep him a month upon trial—there is no harm done."—"Dear, no, ma'am, to be sure—and cook must put up with her disappointment, that's all."—"What disappointment?"—"About her nephew, ma'am; the boy she and I was speaking to you for."—"When?"—"The day you called her up about the almond pudding, ma'am; if you remember, you said you should have no objections to try the boy; and upon that cook bought him new shirts; but they are safe, as I tell her."—"But I did not promise to take her nephew."—"Oh,

no, ma'am, not at all: she does not think to *say that*, else I should be very angry; but the poor woman never let fall a word, any more than frets that the boy should miss such a good place."—"Well, but since I did say that I should have no objection to try him, I shall keep my word; let him come to-morrow: let them both have a fair trial, and at the end of the month I can decide which I like best, and which we had better keep."

Dismissed with these orders, Mrs. Pomfret hastened to report all that had passed to the cook, like a favourite minister; proud to display the extent of her secret influence. In the morning Felix, the cook's nephew, arrived; and the moment he came into the kitchen, every eye, even the scullion's, was fixed upon him with approbation, and afterwards

glanced upon Franklin with contempt—contempt which Franklin could not endure without some confusion, though quite unconscious of having deserved it; nor, upon the most impartial and cool self-examination, could he comprehend the justice of his judges. He perceived indeed, for the comparisons were minutely made in audible and scornful whispers, that Felix was a much handsomer, or, as the kitchen-maid expressed it, a much more genteeler, gentlemanly-looking like sort of a person than he was; and he was made to understand, that he wanted a frill to his shirt, a cravat, a pair of thin shoes, and, above all, shoe-strings, besides other nameless advantages, which justly made his rival the admiration of the kitchen. However, upon calling to mind all that his friend Mr. Spencer had ever said to him, he could

not recollect his having warned him that shoe-strings were indispensable requisites to the character of a good servant; so that he could only comfort himself with resolving, if possible, to make amends for these deficiencies, and to dissipate the prejudices which he saw were formed against him, by the strictest adherence to all that his tutor had taught him to be his duty. He hoped to secure the approbation of his mistress by scrupulous obedience to all her commands, and faithful care of all that belonged to her; at the same time he flattered himself he should win the good-will of his fellow-servants, by showing a constant desire to oblige them. He pursued this plan of conduct steadily for nearly three weeks, and found that he succeeded beyond his expectations in pleasing his mistress; but unfortunately he found it more difficult

to please his fellow-servants, and he sometimes offended when he least expected it.

He had made great progress in the affections of Corkscrew the butler, by working indeed very hard for him, and doing every day at least half his business. But one unfortunate night the butler was gone out—the bell rang—he went up stairs; and his mistress asking where Corkscrew was, he answered that he was gone out. "Where to?" said his mistress. "I don't know," answered Franklin. And as he had told exactly the truth, and meant to do no harm, he was surprised, at the butler's return, when he repeated to him what had passed, to receive a sudden box on the ear, and the appellation of a mischievous, impertinent, mean-spirited brat! "Mischievous, impertinent, mean!" repeated

Franklin to himself; but, looking in the butler's face, which was of a deeper scarlet than usual, he judged that he was far from sober, and did not doubt but that the next morning, when he came to the use of his reason, he would be sensible of his injustice, and apologize for this box of the ear. But no apology coming all day, Franklin at last ventured to request an explanation, or rather to ask what he had best do on the next occasion. "Why," said Corkscrew, "when mistress asked for me, how came you to say I was gone out?"—"Because you know, I saw you go out."—"And when she asked you where I was gone, how came you to say that you did not know?"—"Because indeed I did not."—"You are a stupid blockhead: could not you say I was gone to the washerwoman's?"—"But *were* you?"

said Franklin. "Was I!" cried Corkscrew, and looked as if he would have struck him again; "how dare you give me the lie?—Mr. Hypocrite, you would be ready enough, I'll be bound, to make excuses for yourself.—Why are not mistress's clogs cleaned? go along and blacken 'em this minute, and send Felix to me."

From this time forward Felix alone was privileged to enter the butler's pantry. Felix became the favourite of Corkscrew; and though Franklin by no means sought to pry into the mysteries of their private conferences, nor ever entered without knocking at the door, yet it was his fate once to be sent of a message at an unlucky time, and as the door was half open he could not avoid seeing Felix drinking a bumper of red liquor, which he could not help suspect-

ing to be wine; and as the decanter, which usually went up stairs after dinner, was at this time in the butler's grasp, without any stopper in it, he was involuntarily forced to suspect they were drinking his mistress's wine.

Nor were the bumpers of port the only unlawful rewards which Felix received; his aunt the cook had occasion for his assistance, and she had many delicious douceurs in her gift. Many a handful of currants, many a half custard, many a triangular remnant of pie, besides the choice of his own meal at breakfast, dinner, and supper, fell to the share of the favourite Felix; whilst Franklin was neglected, though he took the utmost pains to please the cook in all honourable service, and, when she was hot, angry, or hurried, he was always at hand to help her; and in the

hour of adversity, when the clock struck five, and no dinner was dished, and no kitchen-maid with twenty pair of hands was to be had, Franklin would answer to her call, with flowers to garnish her dishes, and presence of mind to know, in the midst of the commotion, where every thing that was wanting was to be found; so that, quick as lightning, all difficulties vanished before him. Yet when the danger was over, and the hour of adversity passed, the ungrateful cook would forget her benefactor, and, when it came to be his supper time, would throw him, with a carelessness which touched him sensibly, any thing which the other servants were too nice to eat. All this Franklin bore with fortitude, nor did he envy Felix the dainties which he ate sometimes close beside him: "For," said he to himself, "I have a

clear conscience, and that is more than Felix can have. I know how he wins cook's favour too well, and I fancy I know how I have offended her; for, since the day I saw the basket, she has done nothing but huff me."

The history of the basket was this: Mrs. Pomfret, the housekeeper, had several times, directly and indirectly, given the world below to understand, that she and her mistress thought there was a prodigious quantity of meat eaten of late. Now when she spoke, it was usually at dinner time; she always looked, or Franklin imagined that she looked, suspiciously at him. Other people looked still more maliciously: but as he felt himself perfectly innocent, he went on eating his dinner in silence. But at length it was time to explain. One Sunday there appeared a handsome sirloin

of beef, which before noon on Monday had shrunk almost to the bare bone, and presented such a deplorable spectacle to the opening eyes of Mrs. Pomfret, that her long smothered indignation burst forth, and she boldly declared she was now certain there had been foul play, and she would have the beef found, or she would know why. She spoke, but no beef appeared; till Franklin, with a look of sudden recollection, cried, "Did not I see something like a piece of beef in a basket in the dairy—I think—" The cook, as if somebody had smote her a deadly blow, grew pale; but suddenly recovering the use of her speech, turned upon Franklin, and with a voice of thunder, gave him the lie direct; and forthwith, taking Mrs. Pomfret by the ruffle, led the way to the dairy, declaring she could defy the world "that

she could and so would."—"There, ma'am," said she, kicking an empty basket which lay on the floor—"there's malice for you—ask him why he don't show you the beef in the basket."—"I thought I saw—" poor Franklin began. "You thought you saw!" cried the cook, coming close to him with kimboed arms, and looking like a dragon—"And pray, sir, what business have such a one as you to think you see?—And pray, ma'am, will you be pleased to speak—perhaps, ma'am, he'll condescend to obey you—ma'am, will you be pleased to forbid him my dairy—for here he comes prying and spying about—and how, ma'am, am I to answer for my butter and cream, or any thing at all?—I'm sure it's what I can't pretend to, unless you do me the justice to forbid him my places."

Mrs. Pomfret, whose eyes were blind-

-d by her prejudices against the folks of the *Villaintropic Society*, and also by the secret jealousy of a boy whom she deemed to be growing a favourite of her mistress's, took part with the cook, and ended, as she began, with a firm persuasion that Franklin was the guilty person. "Let him alone, let him alone!" said she; "he has as many turns and windings as a hare; but we shall catch him yet, I'll be bound, in some of his doublings. I knew the nature of him well enough, from the first time I ever set my eyes upon him; but mistress shall have her own way, and see the end of it." These words, and the bitter sense of injustice, drew tears at length fast down the proud cheek of Franklin, which might possibly have touched Mrs. Pomfret, if Felix, with a sneer, had not called them *crocodile tears*. "Felix too!"

thought he, "this is too much." In fact Felix had till now professed himself his firm ally, and had on his part received from Franklin unequivocal proofs of friendship; for it must be told, that every other morning, when it was Felix's turn to get breakfast, Felix never was up in decent time, and must inevitably have come to public disgrace, if Franklin had not gotten all the breakfast things ready for him, the bread and butter spread, and the toast toasted; and had not moreover regularly, when the clock struck eight, and Mrs. Pomfret's foot was heard overhead, run to call the sleeping Felix, and helped him constantly through the hurry of getting dressed one instant before the housekeeper came down stairs. All this could not but be present to his memory; but, scorning to reproach him, Franklin

wiped away his crocodile tears, and preserved a magnanimous silence.

The hour of retribution was however not so far off as Felix imagined. Cunning people may go on cleverly in their devices for some time; but though they may escape once, twice, perhaps ninety-nine times, what does that signify, for the hundredth they come to shame, and lose all their character. Grown bold by frequent success, Felix became more careless in his operations; and it happened that one day he met his mistress full in the passage, as he was going on one of the cook's secret errands. "Where are you going, Felix?" said his mistress. "To the washerwoman's, ma'am," answered he, with his usual effrontery. "Very well," said she; "call at the bookseller's in—stay, I must write down the direction.—Pomfret," said she, open-

ing the housekeeper's room door, "have you a bit of paper?" Pomfret came with the writing-paper, and looked very angry to see that Felix was going out without her knowledge; so, while Mrs. Churchill was writing the direction, she stood talking to him about it; whilst he, in the greatest terror imaginable, looked up in her face as she spoke, but was all the time intent upon parrying on the other side the attacks of a little French dog of his mistress's, which, unluckily for him, had followed her into the passage. Manchon was extremely fond of Felix, who, by way of pleasing his mistress, had paid most assiduous court to her dog; yet now his caresses were rather troublesome. Manchon leaped up, and was not to be rebuffed. "Poor fellow, poor fellow—down! down!—poor fellow!" cried Felix, and put him away.

But Manchon leaped up again, and began smelling near the fatal pocket in a most alarming manner. "You will see by this direction where you are to go," said his mistress. "Manchon, come here—And you will be so good as to bring me—Down! down! Manchon, be quiet!" But Manchon knew better; he had now gotten his head into Felix's pocket, and would not be quiet till he had drawn thence, rustling out of its brown paper, half a cold turkey, which had been missing since morning. "My cold turkey, as I'm alive!" exclaimed the housekeeper, darting upon it with horror and amazement. "What is all this?" said Mrs. Churchill in a composed voice. "I don't know, ma'am," answered Felix, so confused that he knew not what to say—"but—" "But what?" cried Mrs. Pomfret, indignation flashing

from her eyes. "But what?" repeated his mistress, waiting for his reply with a calm air of attention, which still more disconcerted Felix; for though with an angry person he might have some chance of escape, he knew that he could not invent any excuse in such circumstances which could stand the examination of a person in her sober senses. He was struck dumb. "Speak," said Mrs. Churchill, in a still lower tone; "I am ready to hear all you have to say: in my house every body shall have justice—speak—But what?—" *But*," stammered Felix; and, after in vain attempting to equivocate, confessed that he was going to take the turkey to his cousin's: but he threw all the blame upon his aunt, the cook, who, he said, had ordered him upon this expedition. The cook was now summoned; but she totally denied

all knowledge of the affair, with the same violence with which she had lately confounded Franklin about the beef in the basket; not entirely, however, with the same success; for Felix, perceiving by his mistress's eye that she was upon the point of desiring him to leave the house immediately, and not being very willing to leave a place in which he had lived so well with the butler, did not hesitate to confront his aunt with assurance equal to her own. He knew how to bring his charge home to her. He produced a note in her own hand-writing, the purport of which was to request her cousin's acceptance of "some *delicate cold turkey*," and to beg she would send her, by the return of the bearer, a little of her cherry-brandy.

Mrs. Churchill coolly wrote upon the back of the note her cook's discharge, and informed Felix she had no further

occasion for his services; but, upon his pleading with many tears, which Franklin did not call *crocodile tears*, that he was so young, and that he was under the dominion of his aunt, he touched Mrs. Pomfret's compassion, and she obtained for him permission to stay till the end of the month, to give him yet a chance of redeeming his character.

Mrs. Pomfret now seeing how far she had been imposed upon, resolved for the future to be more upon her guard with Felix, and felt that she had treated Franklin with great injustice, when she accused him of mal-practices about the sirloin of beef. Good people, when they are made sensible that they have treated any one with injustice, are impatient to have an opportunity to rectify their mistake; and Mrs. Pomfret was now prepared to see every thing which Franklin did in the most favourable point of

view, especially as the next day she discovered, that it was he who every morning boiled the water for her tea, and buttered her toast, services for which she had always thought she was indebted to Felix. Besides, she had rated Felix's abilities very highly, because he made up her weekly accounts for her; but unluckily once, when Franklin was out of the way, and she brought a bill in a hurry to her favourite to cast up, she discovered that he did not know how to cast up pounds, shillings, and pence, and he was obliged to confess, that he must wait till Franklin came home.

But, passing over a number of small incidents, which gradually unfolded the character of the two boys, we must proceed to a more serious affair.

Corkscrew, frequently, after he had finished taking away supper, and after the housekeeper was gone to bed, sallied

forth to a neighbouring alehouse to drink with his friends. The alehouse was kept by that cousin of Felix's, who was so fond of "*delicate* cold turkey," and who had such choice cherry-brandy. Corkscrew kept the key of the house door, so that he could return home at what hour he thought proper; and, if he should by accident be called for by his mistress after supper, Felix knew where to find him, and did not scruple to make any of those excuses, which poor Franklin had too much integrity to use. All these precautions taken, the butler was at liberty to indulge his favourite passion, which so increased with indulgence, that his wages were by no means sufficient to support him in his way of life. Every day he felt less resolution to break through his bad habits, for every day drinking became more necessary to him. His health was ruined.

With a red, pimpled, bloated face, emaciated legs, and a swelled, diseased body, he appeared the victim of intoxication. In the morning when he got up, his hands trembled, his spirits flagged, he could do nothing till he had taken a dram; an operation which he was obliged to repeat several times in the course of the day, as all those wretched people *must*, who once acquire this custom.

He had run up a long bill at the alehouse which he frequented; and the landlord, who grew urgent for his money, refused to give him further credit. One night, when Corkscrew had drunk enough only to make him fretful, he leaned with his elbow surlily upon the table, began to quarrel with the landlord, and swore that he had not of late treated him like a gentleman. To which the landlord coolly replied, "That as long as he had paid like a gentleman, he

had been treated like one, and *that* was as much as any one could expect, or, at any rate, as much as any one would meet with in this world." For the truth of this assertion he appealed, laughing, to a party of men who were drinking in the room. The men, however, took part with Corkscrew, and, drawing him over to their table, made him sit down with them. They were in high good humour, and the butler soon grew so intimate with them, that in the openness of his heart, he soon communicated to them, not only all his own affairs, but all that he knew, and more than all that he knew, of his mistress's.

His new friends were by no means uninterested in his conversation, and encouraged him as much as possible to talk; for they had secret views, which the butler was by no means sufficiently sober to discover. Mrs. Churchill had

some fine old family plate; and these men belonged to a gang of house-breakers. Before they parted with Corkscrew, they engaged him to meet them again the next night; their intimacy was still more closely cemented. One of the men actually offered to lend Corkscrew three guineas towards the payment of his debt, and hinted that, if he thought proper, he could easily get the whole cleared off. Upon this hint, Corkscrew became all attention, till after some hesitation on their part, and repeated promises of secrecy on his, they at length disclosed their plans to him. They gave him to understand, that if he would assist in letting them into his mistress's house, they would let him have an ample share in the booty. The butler, who had the reputation of being an honest

man, and indeed whose integrity had hitherto been proof against every thing but his mistress's Port, turned pale, and trembled at this proposal; drank two or three bumpers to drown thought; and promised to give an answer the next day.

He went home more than half intoxicated. His mind was so full of what had passed, that he could not help bragging to Felix, whom he found awake at his return, that he could have his bill paid off at the alehouse whenever he pleased; dropping beside some hints, which were not lost upon Felix. In the morning Felix reminded him of the things which he had said; and Corkscrew, alarmed, endeavoured to evade his questions, by saying that he was not in his senses when he talked in that manner. Nothing however that he could urge made any impression upon

Felix, whose recollection on the subject was perfectly distinct, and who had too much cunning himself, and too little confidence in his companion, to be the dupe of his dissimulation. The butler knew not what to do, when he saw that Felix was absolutely determined, either to betray their scheme, or to become a sharer in their booty.

The next night came on, and he was now to make a final decision, either to determine on breaking off entirely with his new acquaintance, or taking Felix with him to join the plot.

His debt, his love of drinking, the impossibility of indulging it without a fresh supply of money, all came into his mind at once, and conquered his remaining scruples. It is said by those whose fatal experience give them a right to be believed, that a drunkard will sacrifice any

thing, every thing, sooner than the pleasure of habitual intoxication.

How much easier is it never to begin a bad custom, than to break through it when once formed!

The hour of rendezvous came, and Corkscrew went to the alehouse, where he found the house-breakers waiting for him, and a glass of brandy ready poured out. He sighed—drank—hesitated—drank again—heard the landlord talk of his bill—saw the money produced, which would pay it in a moment—drank again—cursed himself, and giving his hand to the villain, who was whispering in his ear, swore that he could not help it, and must do as they would have him. They required of him, to give up the key of the house door, that they might get another made by it. He had left it with Felix, and was now obliged

to explain the new difficulty which had arisen. Felix knew enough to ruin them, and must therefore be won over. This was no very difficult task; he had a strong desire to have some worked cravats, and the butler knew enough of him to believe, that this would be a sufficient bribe. The cravats were bought and shown to Felix. He thought them the only things wanting to make him a complete fine gentleman; and to go without them, especially when he had once seen himself in the glass with one tied on in a splendid bow, appeared impossible. Even this paltry temptation, working upon his vanity, at length prevailed with a boy, whose integrity had long been corrupted by the habits of petty pilfering and daily falsehood. It was agreed that, the first time his mistress sent him out on a message, he

should carry the key of the house door to his cousin's, and deliver it into the hands of one of the gang, who were there in waiting for it. Such was the scheme. Felix, the night after all this had been planned, went to bed, and fell fast asleep; but the butler, who had not yet stifled the voice of conscience, felt, in the silence of the night, so insupportably miserable, that, instead of going to rest, he stole softly into the pantry for a bottle of his mistress's wine, and there, drinking glass after glass, he stayed till he became so far intoxicated, that though he contrived to find his way back to bed, he could by no means undress himself. Without any power of recollection, he flung himself upon the bed, leaving his candle half hanging out of the candlestick beside him. Franklin slept in the next room to him,

and presently wakening, thought he perceived a strong smell of something burning. He jumped up, and seeing a light under the butler's door, gently opened it, and to his astonishment beheld one of the bed-curtains in flames. He immediately ran to the butler, and pulled him with all his force to rouse him from his lethargy. He came to his senses at length, but was so terrified and so helpless, that, if it had not been for Franklin, the whole house would soon inevitably have been on fire. Felix, trembling and cowardly, knew not what to do; and it was curious to see him obeying Franklin, whose turn it was now to command. Franklin ran up stairs to waken Mrs. Pomfret, whose terror of fire was so great, that she came from her room almost out of her senses, whilst he, with the greatest presence of mind, recollected where he had seen two

large tubs of water, which the maids had prepared the night before for their washing, and, seizing the wet linen which had been left to soak, threw it upon the flames. He exerted himself with so much good sense, that the fire was presently extinguished. Every thing was now once more safe and quiet. Mrs. Pomfret, recovering from her fright, postponed all inquiries till the morning, and rejoiced that her mistress had not been awakened, whilst Corkscrew flattered himself that he should be able to conceal the true cause of the accident. "Don't you tell Mrs. Pomfret where you found the candle, when you came into the room," said he to Franklin. "If she asks me, you know, I must tell the truth," replied he. "Must!" repeated Felix sneeringly; "what you *must* be a tell-tale!"—"No, I never told any tales of any body, and

I should be very sorry to get any one into a scrape; but for all that I shall not tell a lie, either for myself or any body else, let you call me what name you will."—" But if I were to give you something that you would like," said Corkscrew;—" something that I know you would like!" repeated Felix. " Nothing you can give me will do," answered Franklin steadily; " so it is useless to say any more about it—I hope I shall not be questioned." In this hope he was mistaken; for the first thing Mrs. Pomfret did in the morning was, to come into the butler's room to examine and deplore the burnt curtains, whilst Corkscrew stood by endeavouring to exculpate himself by all the excuses he could invent. Mrs. Pomfret, however, though sometimes blinded by her prejudices, was no fool, and it was absolutely im-

possible to make her believe, that a candle which had been left on the hearth, where Corkscrew protested he had left it, could have set curtains on fire, which were at least six feet distant. Turning short round to Franklin, she desired that he would show her where he found the candle when he came into the room. He begged not to be questioned; but she insisted. He took up the candlestick; but the moment the housekeeper cast her eyes upon it, she snatched it from his hands—"How did this candlestick come here? This was not the candlestick you found here last night," cried she. "Yes, indeed it was," answered Franklin. "That is impossible," retorted she vehemently, "for I left this candlestick with my own hands, last night, in the hall, the last thing I did, after you," said she, turning to the

butler, "were gone to bed—I'm sure of it—Nay, don't you recollect my taking this *japanned candlestick* out of your hand, and making you go up to bed with the brass one, and I bolted the door at the stair-head after you?"

This was all very true; but Corkscrew had afterwards gone down from his room by a back stair-case, unbolted that door, and, upon his return from the alehouse, had taken the japanned candlestick by mistake up stairs, and had left the brass one in its stead upon the hall table.

"Oh, ma'am," said Felix, "indeed you forget, for Mr. Corkscrew came into my room, to desire me to call him betimes in the morning, and I happened to take particular notice, and he had the japanned candlestick in his hand, and that was just as I heard you bolting the door—indeed, ma'am, you forget."—"Indeed, sir,"

retorted Mrs. Pomfret, rising in anger, "I do not forget; I'm not come to be *super-annuated* yet, I hope—How dare you to tell me I forget?"—"Oh, ma'am," cried Felix, "I beg your pardon, I did not—I did not mean to say you forgot—but only I thought, perhaps, you might not particularly remember; for if you please to recollect—"—"I won't please to recollect just whatever you please, sir! —Hold your tongue—Why should you poke yourself into this scrape—What have you to do with it, I should be glad to know?"—"Nothing in the world, oh nothing in the world; I'm sure I beg your pardon, ma'am," answered Felix in a soft tone, and, sneaking off, left his friend Corkscrew to fight his own battle, secretly resolving to desert in good time, if he saw any danger of the alehouse transactions coming to light.

Corkscrew could make but very blundering excuses for himself; and, conscious of his guilt, turned pale, and appeared so much more terrified than butlers usually appear when detected in a lie, that Mrs. Pomfret resolved, as she said, to sift the matter to the bottom. Impatiently did she wait till the clock struck nine, and her mistress's bell rang, the signal for her attendance at her levee.—"How do you find yourself this morning, ma'am," said she, undrawing the curtains. "Very sleepy, indeed," answered her mistress in a drowsy voice; "I think I must sleep half an hour longer—shut the curtains."—"As you please, ma'am; but I suppose I had better open a little of the window-shutter, for it's past nine."—"But just struck."—"Oh dear, ma'am, it struck before I came up stairs, and you know

we are twenty minutes slow.—Bless us," exclaimed Mrs. Pomfret, as she let fall the bar of the window, which roused her mistress—"I'm sure I beg pardon a thousand times—it's only the bar—because I had this great key in my hand."—"Put down the key then, or you'll knock something else down; and you may open the shutters now, for I'm quite awake."—"Dear me! I'm so sorry to think of disturbing you," cried Mrs. Pomfret, at the same time throwing the shutters wide open: "but, to be sure, ma'am, I have something to tell you, which won't let you sleep again in a hurry. I brought up this here key of the house door for reasons of my own, which I'm sure you'll approve of—but I'm not come to that part of my story yet—I hope you were not disturbed by the noise in the house last night,

ma'am."—"I heard no noise."—"I am surprised at that though," continued Mrs. Pomfret, and now proceeded to give the most ample account of the fire, of her fears, and her suspicions.—"To be sure, ma'am, what I say *is*, that, without the spirit of prophecy, one can no ways account for what has passed. I'm quite clear in my own judgment, that Mr. Corkscrew must have been out last night after I went to bed; for, besides the japanned candlestick, which of itself I'm sure is strong enough to hang a man, there's another circumstance, ma'am, that certifies it to me—though I have not mentioned it, ma'am, to no one yet,"—lowering her voice—"Franklin, when I questioned him, told me, that he left the lantern in the outside porch in the court last night, and this morning it was on the kitchen table:

now, ma'am, that lantern could not come without hands; and I could not forget about that, you know; for Franklin says, he's sure he left the lantern out." —"And do you believe *him?*"—"To be sure, ma'am—how can I help believing him? I never found him out in the least symptom of a lie, since ever he came into the house; so one can't help believing in him, like him or not."—"Without meaning to tell a falsehood, however, he might make a mistake."—"No, ma'am, he never makes mistakes; it is not his way to go gossiping and tattling; he never tells any thing till he's asked, and then it's fit he should. About the sirloin of beef, and all, he was right in the end I found, to do him justice; and I'm sure he's right now about the lantern—he's *always right.*" Mrs. Churchill could not help smiling.

—“ If you had seen him, ma'am, last night, in the midst of the fire—I'm sure we may thank him, that we are not burned alive in our beds—and I shall never forget his coming to call me—Poor fellow! he that I was always scolding and scolding, enough to make him hate me. But he's too good to hate any body; and I'll be bound I'll make it up to him now.”—“ Take care that you don't go from one extreme into another, Pomfret; don't spoil the boy.”—“ No, ma'am, there's no danger of that; but I'm sure if you had seen him last night yourself, you would think he deserved to be rewarded.” —“ And so he shall be rewarded,” said Mrs. Churchill; “ but I will try him more fully yet.”—“ There's no occasion, I think, for trying him any more, ma'am,” said Mrs. Pomfret, who was violent in her likings as in her dislikes.

"Pray desire," continued her mistress, "that he will bring up breakfast this morning; and leave the key of the house door, Pomfret, with me."

When Franklin brought the urn into the breakfast parlour, his mistress was standing by the fire with the key in her hand. She spoke to him of his last night's exertions in terms of much approbation. "How long have you lived with me?" said she, pausing; "three weeks, I think?"—"Three weeks and four days, madam."—"That is but a short time; yet you have conducted yourself so as to make me think I may depend upon you. You know this key?"—"I believe, madam, it is the key of the house door."—"It is: I shall trust it in your care. It is a great trust for so young a person as you are." Franklin stood silent, with a firm but

modest look. "If you take the charge of this key," continued his mistress, "remember it is upon condition, that you never give it out of your own hands. In the day-time it must not be left in the door. You must not tell any body where you keep it at night; and the house door must not be unlocked after eleven o'clock at night, unless by my orders. Will you take charge of the key upon these conditions?"—"I will, madam, do any thing you order me," said Franklin, and received the key from her hands.

When Mrs. Churchill's orders were made known, they caused many secret marvellings and murmurings. Corkscrew and Felix were disconcerted, and dared not openly avow their discontent; and they treated Franklin with the greatest seeming kindness and cordiality.

Every thing went on smoothly for three days; the butler never attempted his usual midnight visits to the alehouse, but went to bed in proper time, and paid particular court to Mrs. Pomfret, in order to dispel her suspicions. She had never had any idea of the real fact, that he and Felix were joined in a plot with house-breakers, to rob the house, but thought he only went out at irregular hours, to indulge himself in his passion for drinking.—So stood affairs the night before Mrs. Churchill's birthday. Corkscrew, by the housekeeper's means, ventured to present a petition, that he might go to the play the next day, and his request was granted. Franklin came into the kitchen just when all the servants had gathered round the butler, who, with great importance, was reading aloud the play-bill. Every

body present soon began to speak at once, and with great enthusiasm talked of the play-house, the actors, and actresses; and then Felix, in the first pause, turned to Franklin, and said, "Lord, you know nothing of all this! *you* never went to a play, did you?"—"Never," said Franklin, and felt, he did not know why, a little ashamed; and he longed extremely to go to one. "How should you like to go to the play with me to-morrow," said Corkscrew. "Oh," exclaimed Franklin, "I should like it exceedingly." "And do you think mistress would let you if I asked."—"I think—may be she would, if Mrs. Pomfret asked her."—"But then you have no money, have you?"—"No," said Franklin, sighing. "But stay," said Corkscrew, "what I am thinking of is, that, if mistress will let you go, I'll treat you

myself, rather than that you should be disappointed."

Delight, surprise, and gratitude, appeared in Franklin's face at these words. Corkscrew rejoiced to see that now, at least, he had found a most powerful temptation. "Well, then, I'll go just now and ask her: in the mean time lend me the key of the house door for a minute or two."—"The key!" answered Franklin, starting; "I'm sorry, but I can't do that, for I've promised my mistress never to let it out of my own hands."—"But how will she know any thing of the matter? Run, run, and get it for us."—"No, I *cannot*," replied Franklin, resisting the push which the butler gave his shoulder. "You can't?" cried Corkscrew, changing his tone; "then, sir, I can't take you to the play."—"Very well, sir," said

Franklin sorrowfully, but with steadiness. "Very well, sir," said Felix, mimicking him, "you need not look so important, nor fancy yourself such a great man, because you're master of a key." —"Say no more to him," interrupted Corkscrew; "let him alone to take his own way—Felix, you would have no objection, I suppose, to going to the play with me."—"Oh, I should like it of all things, if I did not come between any body else.—But come, come!" added the hypocrite, assuming a tone of friendly persuasion, "you won't be such a blockhead, Franklin, as to lose going to the play for nothing; it's only just obstinacy: what harm can it do to lend Mr. Corkscrew the key for five minutes; he'll give it to you back again safe and sound?" "I don't doubt *that*," answered Franklin. "Then if

must be all because you don't wish to oblige Mr. Corkscrew."—"No; but I can't oblige him in this: for as I told you before, my mistress trusted me; I promised never to let the key out of my own hands; and you would not have me break my trust: Mr. Spencer told me *that* was worse than *robbing*." At the word *robbing* both Corkscrew and Felix involuntarily cast down their eyes, and turned the conversation immediately, saying that he did very right; that they did not really want the key, and had only asked for it just to try if he would keep his word. "Shake hands," said Corkscrew, "I am glad to find you out to be an honest fellow!"—"I'm sorry you did not think me one before, Mr. Corkscrew," said Franklin, giving his hand rather proudly; and he walked away.

"We shall make no hand of this prig," said Corkscrew. "But we'll have the key from him in spite of all his obstinacy," said Felix; "and let him make his story good if he can afterwards. He shall repent of these airs. To-night I'll watch him, and find out where he hides the key; and when he's asleep, we'll get it without thanking him."

This plan Felix put in execution. They discovered the place where Franklin kept the key at night, stole it whilst he slept, took off the impression in wax, and carefully replaced it in Franklin's trunk where they found it.

Probably our young readers cannot guess what use they could mean to make of this impression of the key in wax. Knowing how to do mischief is very different from wishing to do it; and the most innocent persons are generally the

least ignorant. By means of the impression, which they had thus obtained, Corkscrew and Felix proposed to get a false key made by Picklock, a smith who belonged to their gang of housebreakers; and with this false key they knew they could open the door whenever they pleased.

Little suspecting what had happened, Franklin the next morning went to unlock the house-door as usual; but finding the key entangled in the lock, he took it out to examine it, and perceived a lump of wax sticking in one of the wards. Struck with this circumstance, it brought to his mind all that had passed the preceding evening, and, being sure that he had no wax near the key, he began to suspect what had happened; and he could not help recollecting what he had once heard Felix say, that " give

him but a halfpenny-worth of wax, and he could open the strongest lock that ever was made by hands."

All these things considered, Franklin resolved to take the key just as it was, with the wax sticking in it, to his mistress. "I was not mistaken when I thought I might trust *you* with this key," said Mrs. Churchill, after she had heard his story. "My brother will be here to-day, and I shall consult him; in the mean time say nothing of what has passed."

Evening came, and after tea Mr. Spencer sent for Franklin up stairs. "So, Mr. Franklin," said he, "I'm glad to find you are in such high *trust* in this family." Franklin bowed. "But you have lost, I understand, the pleasure of going to the play to-night."—"I don't think any thing—much, I mean—of that, sir,"

answered Franklin, smiling. "Are Corkscrew and Felix *gone* to the play?" —"Yes; half an hour ago, sir."—"Then I shall look into his room, and examine the pantry and the plate that is under his care."

When Mr. Spencer came to examine the pantry, he found the large salvers and cups in a basket behind the door, and the other things placed so as to be easily carried off. Nothing at first appeared in Corkscrew's bed-chamber to strengthen their suspicions, till, just as they were going to leave the room, Mrs. Pomfret exclaimed, "Why, if there is not Mr. Corkscrew's dress coat hanging up there! and if here isn't Felix's fine cravat that he wanted in such a hurry to go to the play!—Why, sir, they can't be gone to the play—look at the cravat.—Ha! upon my

word, I am afraid they are not at the play—No, sir, no! you may be sure that they are plotting with their barbarous gang at the alehouse—and they'll certainly break into the house to-night—we shall all be murdered in our beds, as sure as I'm a living woman, sir—But if you'll only take my advice—" "Pray, good Mrs. Pomfret, don't be alarmed." —"Nay, sir, but I won't pretend to sleep in the house, if Franklin isn't to have a blunderbuss, and I a *baggonet*." —"You shall have both, indeed, Mrs. Pomfret; but don't make such a noise, for every body will hear you."

The love of mystery was the only thing which could have conquered Mrs. Pomfret's love of talking. She was silent; and contented herself the rest of the evening with making signs, looking

ominous, and stalking about the house like one possessed with a secret.

Escaped from Mrs. Pomfret's fears and advice, Mr. Spencer went to a shop within a few doors of the alehouse, which he heard Corkscrew frequented, and sent to beg to speak to the landlord. He came, and when Mr. Spencer questioned him, confessed that Corkscrew and Felix were actually drinking in his house, with two men of suspicious appearance: That, as he passed through the passage, he heard them disputing about a key; and that one of them said, "Since we've got the key, we'll go about it to-night." This was sufficient information. Mr. Spencer, lest the landlord should give them information of what was going forwards, took him along with him to Bow-street.

A constable and proper assistance was sent to Mrs. Churchill's. They stationed themselves in a back parlour, which opened on a passage leading to the butler's pantry, where the plate was kept. A little after midnight they heard the hall-door open; Corkscrew and his accomplices went directly to the pantry, and there Mr. Spencer and the constable immediately secured them, as they were carrying off their booty.

Mrs. Churchill and Pomfret had spent the night at the house of an acquaintance in the same street. "Well, ma'am," said Mrs. Pomfret, who had heard all the news in the morning, "the villains are all safe. I was afraid to go to the window this morning, but it was my luck to see them all go by to gaol—they looked so shocking!—I am sure I never shall forget Felix's look to my

dying day!—But poor Franklin! ma'am, that boy has the best heart in the world—I could not get him to give a second look at them as they passed—poor fellow! I thought he would have dropped; and he was so modest, ma'am, when Mr. Spencer spoke to him, and told him he had done his duty."—"And did my brother tell him what reward I intend for him?"—"No, ma'am, and I'm sure Franklin thinks no more of *reward* than I do."—"I intend," continued Mrs. Churchill, "to sell some of my old useless plate, and to lay it out in an annuity for Franklin's life."—"La, m'am!" exclaimed Mrs. Pomfret with unfeigned joy, "I'm sure you are very good; and I'm very glad of it."—"And," continued Mrs. Churchill, "here are some tickets for the play, which I shall beg you, Pomfret, to give

him, and to take him with you."—"I am very much obliged to you, indeed, ma'am; and I'll go with him with all my heart, and choose such plays as won't do no prejudice to his morality. —And ma'am," said Mrs. Pomfret, "the night after the fire I left him my great Bible, and my watch, in my will; for I never was more mistaken at the first in any boy in my born days: but he has won me by his own *deserts*, and I shall from this time forth love all the *Villaintropic* folks for his sake."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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